MUSINGS OF A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

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MUSINGS

OF

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.

MUSINGS

OF A

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.

BY

AILENROC.

"At thirty, man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan."
YOUNG.

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I FORMERLY held that, if one had anything to say, it could be as well said in social converse as any other way. That belief is now a vanished illusion, — vanished with my youth. I have found out that other people have something to say, too; and when I am putting forth my most brilliant ideas, most telling sarcasms, and convincing arguments, they are not listening at all (or only with one ear), but are thinking all the time what they shall say when I get through. You know, reader, that one never gets credit for brains, simply because one has listened well; but if one is *well read*, why, that immediately gives one a place among the *literati;*

and that, knowing this, many people will *read* who will not *listen.* "Therefore," having for more than forty years tried in vain to be well listened to, I now make an effort to be *well read* — trusting for success and approval in my undertaking.

AILENROC.

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MUSINGS

OF A

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.

MIDDLE LIFE.

"Manhood and womanhood with their dower of noble work, and strength to do it." — MRS. CHARLES.

YES, I *am* middle-aged — on the "wrong side of forty" — with streaks of gray hair, and here and there a wrinkle.

Was brought to look this fact in the face by a remark of a young friend of mine, a few days ago, when urging her not to care what "Mother Grundy" said on a certain occasion. "Well," answered she, "middle-aged ladies, like you, can do as they like; but it would never answer for young girls to be so inde-

pendent." I quietly assented, and she did not, for an instant, suspect that she had reminded me of a fact which I only remembered when my birthdays came 'round, or when my present indifference to what "people say," so contrasts itself with my girlish fear of censure, as to tell me that I have arrived at the *independent age.* Ah! if it were only independence — but, alas! alas! for middle age — how much is gone — how much fled before we get there! Before we achieve our independence!

It seems to me that, like republics, *we* only gain self-reliance, knowledge, independence, strength, through shattered hopes, strife, heart losses, graves, and those added years which take away the simplicity of our youth. Like republics, did I say? Aye, look at our own land — this great America! The most glorious and Christian republic the world ever saw! Her youth was weak and boastful — she was an awkward, rough school-girl, yet simple, honest, innocent — full of high hopes and great aims; but she has reached middle age, and

is a great country, and strong (I admit), in full noontide brilliance — rivalling the old monarchies in their fights, their fashions, and their follies! Has she lost nothing to gain it all?

And you, men and women, sisters and brothers! all who are in the noontide of your strength; who have achieved independence of thought and action! What have you lost? — Nay, I see it in the faces of even the happiest among you. In yours, successful man — successful in business, in love, in fame. I have seen you stop, and look with longing eye at the boys flying their kites; or at the youngster coming home from school, with his satchel of books; and I knew (though you only appeared to wipe your nose) that you gave a *tear* to school-day pleasures and friendships, and the zest which sweetened all.

I knew, if your little daughter sang "Ben Bolt" for you that night, you would ask her why she never sang it before — ask if it were not a new song, and feel that the last verse was not as true as the others, for

"There '*was*' a change in you."

And you, successful beauty — you fortunate woman; who married well and the man of your own choice — you, who have love and give it, and are proud of your children who do you credit, — have you lost nothing in all these years? When you get with the friends of your girlhood (those who are left), do you talk of your husband and children? — of the present at all? Perhaps you mention with pride and thankfulness your many blessings; but it is of past days that you, that they all talk most. You talk of the time when the world was all before you; and voices grow low and eyes fill as you speak of the dead — the changed. And when some one recalls old day-dreams, and the girlish simplicity which believed that a "Thaddeus of Warsaw," or a "Cœlebs," was a certain reward of beauty and propriety — a smile, with a regret in it, goes around.

Aye! vanished illusions! vanished illusions! To middle age, men are but men, and women but women — not gods and goddesses; and

rare it is to find a person who, after forty, believes in the perfection of any human being. The truth is, that after that age we are all *practical* believers in the "total depravity" of the opposite sex, at any rate; and it scarcely needs marriage even, to convert us. This change comes to all; the most fortunate, the happiest, the best. But, friends, what of those others, by far the most numerous, with wrecked fortunes, shattered hopes, and broken hearts? Ask them? Ask that woman sitting alone — thinking, thinking!

You and I remember her as a bright girl, full of noble impulses — with strong hopes, poetic fancies, and great aims; and she has, perhaps, realized her early promise, and become famous. Yet, ask her! and she will answer with a *smile*, which is sadder than a *sigh*, "You see

> A worn and weary woman,
> With all her illusions flown."

She is a strong woman now; not easily deceived; calm, cool, practical — expects not

much, trusts little. Perhaps she writes and says sharp things, which are not always Christian and gentle; and the world calls her reckless and unwomanly. "Judge not:" you know not what wrongs — what heart-breaks have changed her so. Believe me, there is a story back of it. Indeed, most men and women at forty have their story, either of disappointed love or ambition; or heart and home made desolate by some great crime or wrong; and they scarcely know themselves how it has changed them. But God be thanked that the change sometimes is for the better; and that when it is not, He brings "good out of evil;" and that those great, fiery, impulsive intellects, which time and trial have hardened and sharpened instead of softening (from Dean Swift down to Ward Beecher), have done some good in the world — have found a place, and amidst all their rough witticisms, and queer theology, have told many home truths, which men of finer mould would have left unsaid, and which the world needed to have said.

I am not, reader, seeking to excuse those men or women who let the dealings of Providence, and the world's rougher usage, drive them into shipwreck of their faith, and to a "higher law" than Revelation; or to forgetting that true type of manliness and womanliness drawn by the "pen of inspiration." But I would say, pity and forgive them. You know not what aching heads and hollow hearts may first have been theirs. You, who are hedged about with sympathy and love—you, who have never had anything harder to bear than the *death* of loved ones, pity those who have living troubles; and if it change them for the worse, thank God, who has spared you.

Then, too, there are those who—starting out on life's voyage, with sails all spread, and the calm sea around rippling in the sunshine, unwarned, and uncounselled—rush into quicksands, or on a hidden rock; and out of the wreck lift a voice to prevent younger mariners from losing their all in the same venture. If they cry loudly, and use strong terms, instead

of blaming, let us rather thank them for their generous efforts in others' behalf; remembering that those who have suffered most from a wrong, feel it most keenly; and that all reformers, or would-be reformers (from Martin Luther down), have gone to extremes, and that there can be no reform without it.

But I said that sometimes the change is for the better; and so it is, and so it might always be, if we men and women would only follow the course of nature, and, like our own forests, be rocked by wind and storm into strength and beauty, as we reach our maturity.

Oh! I have seen it, and so have you all; seen strong men, and gentle women, whose sufferings, trials, and temptations have only served to make them stronger and gentler; to make them sympathizers with every sufferer, comforters to every mourner — increasing their love and charity for their fellow-men; and their faith in their God.

Yes, we have hope for middle life, as well as consolation. Have we failed in our life-work,

you and I? Ah! how much we meant to do for our race — our age. Yet, alas! how little we have done! How we have failed! —

> "Fail! yet rejoice, because no less
> The failure that makes thy distress
> May teach another full success."

Could we only see it so — only feel that our *failure* is a brighter beacon than our *success* — that our *burning* house will guide the wanderer better than any little rushlight we might have set in the windows of that house.

Then, too, it is not always failure. Is our trial, as a nation, for self-government a failure, because England has "stuck her finger in our pie," till she roused all the bad blood both sides of "Mason and Dixon's line;" and the North, putting a chip on her shoulder, dared the South to knock it off; and the South being of stuff which would not be dared, they came to blows, and spilt some of the best blood of our land, and wrecked fortunes, and broke hearts? Because all this happened, is our nationality a failure? And I answer — no! a

thousand times no! Are we any weaker in sixty-nine than in sixty-one?

Dare either of the great powers of Europe lay a finger on our flag?—or even on our sores to pity us? No, no; we are "Young America" no longer. We have fought our way to manhood—to middle age; can deal a man's blow, endure with a man's calmness; and, with a man's patience and perseverance, gather up the broken links which bound brother to brother; and out of the wrecked fortunes, spilt blood, and broken hearts forge a chain of forgiveness, sympathy, and love which shall bind us forever.

And shall men and women talk of failure, because they have reached their zenith? because their soap-bubbles have burst? because their castles-in-the-air are demolished? because their illusions have given place to realities—their poetry to prose? Shall they call it failure that their life-work is not accomplished, when they are stronger, wiser, and more capable than ever before? Oh, friends! you have been preparing

for the battle all these years of discipline and trial, do not shrink from it *now*.

But some, I know, are fettered, hindered on every side, and feel their lives frittering away in daily cares. Yes, some there are, both men and women, (for I utter not the popular cry of *men's* larger field,) many of both sexes, be it whose fault it may, striving to eke out a living for loved ones. The father, husband, or brother spending brain and energies, which might have ruled a nation well, upon the petty details of some business which leaves no room, nor time, nor strength for intellectual growth, nor the advancement of his age, nor the improvement of his kind. The wife, mother, or sister, bearing her part in care for the family; in domestic retrenchment; in a prevention of household waste, which irritates the temper, and wears away the spirit of a high-strung, intellectual woman, and causes her to cry out: "Is this all? Is this the end of my youthful hopes and aims? — this trying to make a pound of butter last longer than it used to? Oh, life!

life! Is this all? Is this all that middle age brings us?" And I answer, No, this is not all; yet will not be one of "Job's comforters," and tell you, if it is all, you deserve it, and should be thankful for what you have left. I will not insult either your understanding or your Christianity, by supposing that you do not know that "No man deserveth anything at the hand of the Lord." Besides, how know I, or any other man, that your sufferings, whether mental or physical, are not all sent, like Job's, because you are especially near and dear to the heart of "Our Father." But I do know that even in this life "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job better than the beginning." Aye, there is more meaning than we usually give to it, in the old proverb, "Where there is life there is hope." Think you, it originally meant only physical life, mere existence? I trow not. My meaning is — of life in its fullest sense — *Energy, Trust, and Faith.* Faith in God, faith in man, and faith in your own right arm upheld by an Almighty one. Pray for success in the lifting of the burden; then watch for its removal.

Ah, middle age! you have lost one thing with your youth, which you may regain if you will. It is the simplicity of prayer which you had when at your mother's knee, for a new toy, or that God would take away the naughty toothache, or that He would not let the dark hurt you. Does it not all come back to you now how, with simple faith, you watched for the answer? How the new top (perhaps weeks after), and the remedy which allayed the pain, came to you as direct answers to prayer? And how, though the dark was still a terror, it could not hurt you, because you had asked God, "for Christ's sake," not to let it. Verily, we must every one "become as little children," not alone to inherit heaven, but to gain earth, too. "Only believe."

But to all in middle life, both the fortunate and the unfortunate, there comes also consolation. If we have fewer hopes; more graves to tend; fewer living left to love; more battles to fight; and more storms to breast—at least all the burdens we have borne; the pains we have

suffered; and the storms passed through, are over, are ended — *they* can never come again. If so much joy and hope have gone from our lives, just so much sorrow and suffering have gone too.

> "One cross the less remains for me to bear,
> Already borne is that of yesterday."

Half our life gone. Half our earthly joy and hope — and, blessed be God, half our sorrows, half our pains. Already the cross is lighter; the home, yonder, is nearer.

> "I 'm nearer my home to-day
> Than I ever was before; —
> Nearer the bound of life,
> Where we lay our burdens down.
> Nearer leaving my cross,
> Nearer wearing my crown."

AM I AN OYSTER?

"What 's done, we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted." — BURNS.

I DO not ask for information, but only in indignant remonstrance at being treated as one. I, a respectable, middle-aged woman, to be taken for an oyster!

If it had been a *monkey*, I should quietly have submitted to "inevitable destiny," for Darwin says that we were all originally monkeys; and of course Darwin knows. Was he not by? Did he not see the transformation, and know all about the world and its inhabitants centuries before their recorded creation?

I am open to conviction on the subject of monkeys; for, by frequent association with apes, and the tendency human nature has for aping

those it comes in contact with, who knows but I might have dwindled back to my original condition. Besides, monkeys certainly do belong to the highest order of brute creation. They have instincts, character, individuality, and enough of human nature to cause them to delight in tormenting their neighbors, and meddling in their business. In truth, they have so many qualities belonging to mankind, that to have been taken for one would not have been quite so much of an insult, especially as I have made the mistake several times myself with regard to some of my acquaintances. To be taken for a *monkey* is bad enough, to be sure, but — an *oyster!*

If it had been a *cat* even, it would have been better; for pussy has means of self-defence, powers of locomotion, and is possessed of affections and antipathies. If you treat her well, feed her, and give her a nice place on the hearth-rug, she will purr, rub herself against you to show her delight, keep your closets free from mice, and otherwise prove herself a pleasant inmate of your family.

But starve her, kick her off the rug, and rub her *fur* the wrong way, and *then* see! see how she will spit, and show her claws and teeth when you come near her. Now, I *have* so much sympathy with pussy when she is driven from the fire, and her fur rubbed the wrong way, that I must have claws *somewhere* concealed, which would make their appearance under similar circumstances.

But I *have no* affinity, no sympathy with an *oyster;* — lying still, shut up in its shell, doing nothing but imbibing. So little of the animal about it, that, when once ordered by my physician to take no other animal food, I felt as if put on vegetable diet — and told him so.

Then, these creatures have no means of self-defence; or at least do not use them. When "cook" takes hold of them, and, in an insulting manner, pitches them into a basket preparatory to roasting, why don't they open those big mouths of theirs, and give her finger a bite she would remember? — I should. And when she puts them, alive, on broiling hot coals, why

don't they make a fuss, and jump off? — you would, and I would, and most anything else with animal life would; but not *they*. There they lie and bear it, till the fire proves too much for their vitality; then, in a very decent way, open their mouths at last, and with dying gasp say, "You have done for *me;* had you not better, for your own sake, take me off."

I leave it to an "enlightened public;" am I an oyster? An oyster, indeed! Let anybody try it, and see if they have not taken hold of an electric eel instead! And they did try it — have been trying it for some time — everybody; "all the world, and the rest of mankind."

I may as well tell you the whole story; not to get any sympathy, since you, like the rest, will take me for an oyster! I feel sure you will — it is the fashion to do so. Still, I always feel better when I relieve my mind; and this being one of the subjects upon which I tried, vainly, to be *well-listened* to, shall make an effort at being well-read.

Was a little dyspeptic, from desperate efforts

to digest late dinners, and the "Negro Suffrage Bill." Then, from reading so much about "Reconstruction," "Tenure of Office," and "horrible murders," (meanwhile being much alone, and having no one to whom to express my opinion,) became a highly-charged electric battery. Physician sent for; and the case stated by "anxious friends" to be—*exhaustion from over-exertion.* Exhaustion! reader, I would have given worlds to have gotten a chance to *exhaust* my poor, bursting brain; but, being too sick to assert my rights just then, held my tongue, while the doctor prescribed, "Lie still, and do nothing." Of course, like any reasonable being, I took the prescription, with limitations; supposing it meant nothing which could be called work—nothing to tire one; such as cleaning house, making a shirt, walking a mile, writing a book, or, reading one like—

Not being an oyster, I did not take it literally. Did not for an instant imagine that it meant to lie perfectly still, shut up in my shell—

neither speaking, nor reading, nor thinking, nor using my hands nor feet, not even expressing my opinion when imposed upon.

You may, therefore, imagine my surprise when, upon taking up an amusing book for an hour, or darning a pair of stockings, or talking a little, I was met with such remonstrances as the following: "Oh! it will hurt your head to read; let me read to you." I hid the book under the bed-clothes, and held it tight; it would have *finished* my *head* entirely to be "read to." Or, "You must not sew, or talk; the doctor said you must be perfectly quiet; let *me* do the talking." The person in question was fond of doing the talking.

I am naturally patient — at least, have great powers of endurance, which I take to be the same thing — so bore all this uncomplainingly, trying every day to do *more* of "nothing" than I did the day before. But fortunately, or unfortunately, just which you choose, I had read the "Declaration of Independence;" and, if I had not, should have known that "there is a

point beyond which *patience* ceases to be a virtue." Accordingly, when put on broiling coals, that is — when the dust was swept in my eyes, instead of out of the door; my bed knocked, and doors slammed by an awkward chambermaid; and cakes sent me by my cook which would make good shoe leather, — I got angry. I had both nerves and dyspepsia, and — was not an oyster! How could I help it? I did n't try. I ordered the cakes down-stairs and the chambermaid out of the room; and when told at this crisis that "the doctor said I must not get excited," asserted my rights, and exclaimed, "I don't care what the doctor says; besides he does not know the truth." The little girl's definition of the ninth commandment was, "When nobody did nothing, and somebody went and told of it." That is just what you have been doing; you have been "bearing false witness against your neighbor." You shall *not* call me impatient and irritable, just because I will not be treated like an oyster. I am *not* one; and will not submit to mere existence in

a shell! to be put on broiling coals, and say nothing! Call me a cat! an eel! a monkey! a Bengal tiger! or even a locomotive! but — not an *oyster!*

SNOW.

"The snow fell fast and thick. He . . . thought that those white ashes strewn upon his hopes and misery were suited to them well." — DICKENS.

THE lamps are not yet lit. The boys are making merry with their snowballs and their sleds; the people are hurrying by; and the housemaid opposite is pretending to close the parlor-shutters early, to keep out the snow, but, meanwhile, carrying on a flirtation with the neighboring coachman. I lay down my work, and sit and watch it all through the gloaming — the boys, the passers-by, the girl and her lover; and, as the snow falls faster and faster, and the children shout louder and merrier, there comes to me the memory of "the long ago." I forget "the

weary, relentless years" which have passed, and am a child again. A child in the old home far away, peering out, through the chintz curtains, at the snow falling as this does now.

Ah! how the whole scene comes back, of that family room. The wood-fire, crackling and sending forth a bright glow, lights up the home scene. The two boys in the corner playing ninepins; the tea-table waiting for my father's coming; my mother sitting by the fire, with her baby in her arms, listening to "our eldest," who, in the next room, with the door slightly ajar, is playing what we children call her *twilight music.* A girl a little older than myself, and a boy a little younger, join me at the window, and we talk in subdued tones, for we know that this is our mother's hour for rest. We discuss plans for the morrow. If the snow be deep, talk of building snow forts, with the help of the other brothers. There are to be two of these forts, a lady in each, protected by several knights, — she to make balls for her defenders. And "how we

love the snow, and hope that there will be a great deal." But I do not like to tell the others of the thoughts which had come to me, (as I stood there alone,) of the poor little children who had no warm mittens like mine; and of my little friend who had died the winter before, and was buried under the snow. I throw off these graver thoughts, shake back my curls, and join with zest in the anticipation of to-morrow's sport; meanwhile snuggling closely to my little brother, who, putting his arm around my neck, says, "I choose you, curly-head, for my lady." Then, as the other sister, looking up, remarks, reproachfully, "J——, you always choose her;" he answers, with his rare and knightly smile, "Well, it is because she is the weakest, and I the strongest of us all."

Oh, little knight! true knight! it was not long that "the weakest of us all" had your strong arm and chivalrous heart to protect her from life's snows. Ah, me! ah, me! I remember a time, not many years after, when

that arm was palsied, and that heart cold in the death struggle. And the snow beat against the window, and — on his grave — and, oh! brother! brother! though you went from us resting on a stronger Arm than your own, it was long, very long, before I could feel you were *above* the snows, and bathing in the sunshine.

But

> . . . . "forgotten things
> Stumble back strangely:" . . . .

the old home, my child-life, and that winter's eve, haunt me still. I hear my sister's song; then footsteps in the hall. I rush for my evening kiss; I feel my father's hand upon my head, and hear "little daughter" in tones I shall never hear again till I reach that home, where *he* waits to welcome *me*. I turn to say "father," and no father is there. Instead of "our eldest's" song, I hear the snow beating against the window.

It has all vanished! — the bright fire, the old home, the loved ones. The curly-headed child is a middle-aged woman now, with none of the

home faces around her — only portraits on the wall, and graves covered by the snow, and a memory of the past. I turn from the window sadly, shiveringly; and, drawing my chair to the register, say, "Snow, I do not love you! You are cold, cruel, unsympathizing! What care you for my loss, for my loneliness, for my parted ones? What care you for my dead, as you beat pitilessly upon their graves, hiding the verdure, which spoke of their resurrection? No, no; you speak of death: I do not love you! And not alone of death, O snow, do you speak, but of estrangements, too. You come down, noiselessly at first, from we scarcely know where. There is no darkness to herald your approach — no storm-cloud, like good, honest rain; only a thin veil which hides the sun, which grows thicker and thicker, till it shuts out all that is bright and beautiful in nature." And so with estrangements. At first a thin veil; we scarcely know where it is from or what it is.

"Only a shadow 'twixt my friend and me."

But a coldness like snow comes; and the shadow deepens, thickens, till all brightness and beauty are shut out from our life. Our hearts grow cold, and we learn to thank God for the loved ones covered by the snow *here*, and basking in the sunshine *yonder*. Oh! they are nearer than the living.

> "Space may keep friends apart;
> Death has a mighty thrall;
> There is another gulf
> Harder to cross than all."

And how we long for *the* Sun to melt these snows; to dissipate these shadows; to warm these frozen hearts, and give us back in another and a better life the beauty and brightness the shadows have hidden in this.

The snow is coming down furiously now. The lamp in front of our house is just being lighted, and I, getting up, return to the window, and by its light watch the passers-by. There goes a newsboy, crying the evening paper. Look how cruelly the snow beats down upon him, finding its way into his little neck, and in

that hole in his trousers. See how he fights with it, and knocks it off; then calls "third e-di-tion," then blows his poor little purple fingers! Is the snow beautiful? Poor little newsboy! you do not see any beauty in it.

Nor does that woman with the thin face, and thinner shawl, as she hurries to a fireless home, — to a home where poverty cannot stop the cracks, nor mend the roof and windows to keep out the snow.

"God help the poor when it snows!" Now comes a man with an unmistakable something about him; the quick glance, the manner in which he turns up his coat-collar, and the firm, short, though tired step, all proclaiming him a business-man, and not a prosperous one, either. He has not the air of a man whose coachman has neglected coming for him; nor of one who has missed a car. His whole bearing is that of a person accustomed to endurance; and we know by the way he braces himself against the storm, that he has a long walk before him, and no extra pennies to spend in riding. He is

evidently a brave man, perhaps a Christian; but he is tired and worn, and walks along with that sullen air which seems to say, "Of course it snows; and the pavement must be cleaned, and paid for; and the boys will spoil their new boots running in the snow." Does he love the snow, think you? Or does that seamstress yonder, going home tired from her work, with just strength enough to get there, without meeting any obstacles on the way? No, no; nor do I either. I may draw my shawl ever so closely about me, and close the blinds to keep out the snow; but I cannot shut from me the thought of the tired, the homeless, and the poor, out in the pitiless storm.

And yet the poet talks of the "*beautiful snow!*" Beautiful! So is death, if it be calm, and peaceful, and natural; or — so it looks to us. But let it come in fury, or battle, or murder, or pestilence, or by some terrible railroad or steamboat accident, — the recital of which causes the strongest nerves to thrill, — and then, is death beautiful? Has violence any beauty?

Oh, no! and snow, *you* are only beautiful, or appear to be, when you come down quietly, in great starry flakes, falling gently, gently.

I had a letter lately from a young physician living up among the northern lakes. He writes: "It has snowed forty demons for two days and two nights; and still it comes. The roads are blocked up, and I can only get to my patients on snow-shoes; and the light of day is entirely excluded, from even our second story, by great snow-drifts. Thank God that we have plenty in the house to eat; and may He take pity on those who have not, for no *human* power can reach them now." Is such snow beautiful? Do you love it? I do not. I accept it as a necessary evil, just as I do all of God's mysterious dispensations; but I don't love it, even though it be "the poor man's manure." Manure has its uses, to be sure; yet is there anything particularly lovely or lovable in it, though it does make things grow? Trial and discipline develop us, and make us grow (spiritually); still, we are not very fond of them;

nor does God expect or wish us to be; only to bear them with patience and resignation. And so with snow: I try to be resigned to it, especially as my lot is cast in regions where it is likely to snow several months during the year; yet, if ever I break the tenth commandment, it is in envying those who live under Southern skies, and scarcely ever see it.

Yes, the love of snow is a vanished illusion! and scarcely of my youth — it vanished with my childhood. Even sleigh-riding had no charm for me after I grew older; and I never could understand the charm it had for others.

There has been a great deal of "twaddle" written, and a great number of stories founded, "*on the fact*" of sleigh-riding being conducive to explanations between lovers. I don't believe it is — not true love. It may encourage flirtations; but how should the ringing of bells, and the most desperate attempts to keep one's feet, hands, and nose warm, be the time for a declaration of love; or even for drawing hearts closer together? There may be fun, frolic,

gayety, in sleigh-riding; but no sentiment, poetry, nor real happiness. Give *me* balmy air; give me trees, flowers, soft showers, verdure; the shadows on the mountains and in the valleys; give me the grain fields and the reapers; the singing of birds and the glorious sunshine, — all of which speak of life, poetry, and love. Yes, give me sunshine. Let me die in spring-time, when all nature bursts the bands of death, that I may think of my springing into eternal life; but not in winter, when the snow, as one great winding-sheet, wraps the earth. No, Snow!

> "I love thee [not], all unlovely as thou seem'st,
> And dreaded as thou art."

RIGHTS.

"If wrong our hearts, our heads are right in vain."
YOUNG.

AMONG the many vanished illusions of my youth, I count the utility of contending for *rights*. I mean the talk and bluster so prevalent in these days, that one can scarcely take up a periodical, go to a social gathering, or even (I blush to say it) to the house of God, without hearing this *slang talk* — I can give it no better name — about *rights*.

It is rights of husband and rights of wife; rights of parent and rights of child; rights of master and rights of servant; rights of white man and rights of black. A right to do every-

thing which human wisdom can conceive or human passion dictate.

Now, as I intimated above, all this talk is useless. If you have *rights*,—if, conscientiously and religiously, you feel them to be *rights*,—why take them, if you can get them; and you usually can. Sometimes, I admit, you cannot. *Then*, certainly, there is no use of contending; especially when we consider that human nature is so constituted that the simple discussion of any question rouses opposition. Don't you know what your rights are, without discussion? Is it necessary to call a convention to find out? And cannot your neighbor take care of his own rights without *your* help?

Of course, I am not speaking *now* of those great questions of right and wrong in the sight of God. *These* are not discussed in this nineteenth century!

Who, for instance, cares anything about that great *wrong* abiding in our midst;—off in those pleasant valleys, where a people calling themselves a part of this Christian land (the laws of

which make *bigamy a crime*) hold the right, and practise it, to multiply their wives *ad libitum?* And yet — and yet — these men and women, all around us, prate of "*women's rights.*" Her right to elevation, to culture, to equality! Oh, sisters! so long as the Turkish harem, with more than Turkish degradation, exists in Utah, — and *Utah* is a *free*, *enlightened* territory of your own Union, — cease your cry for *rights;* take what you have, and be thankful for them. With the right to glorious womanhood — to a home where you may reign *sole* and respected mistress; aye, queen, if you will. The right by instilling good principles into the young minds about you, and the expression of noble Christian sentiments in social life, to influence the future of your land and the world. Then you can vote, too! at least I *did*, and *do;* and neither waited for the "Woman's Convention" to determine my *right*, nor for the law's *permission.* And, what is more, shall *not* fold my vote up, and hide it, as these *men* do. Am not ashamed of it; you are all welcome to a glance

at it. You cannot cheat me out of it; and no fraud or bribery can prevent my winning the day.

I *vote* (in the first place) to be a *woman.* Am *glad* I am a *woman*, *proud* to be a woman, and *intend* to be one. Nobody shall persuade me to ape *men.* I will not wear boots higher than my ankle; nor standing collars; nor mannish hats. And I *will* stay in the house in wet weather, or dry, and take care of my family; and make pickles and preserve fruit, and darn stockings, instead of going out to doctor some man with the small-pox; or to harangue a sleepy jury in a dirty court-house; or to travel two or three hundred miles to collect a bad debt.

And then I *vote* (in the second place) to know my *own* business better than any one else knows it; and, if it be necessary, *shall* go out, in fair weather or foul, to make a living for loved ones; or to save any poor soul from ruin; or to prevent myself from being cheated or imposed upon.

I *vote* even to force my way, alone, through a crowd; or to bear my testimony in court, if necessity impel, and *not* "faint at the idea." And to stop in the street, and, by calling the police, rescue a *little* boy from the hands of a big boy, when my *brother man* is either too *indifferent* or too *cowardly* to interfere. Also to attend to my own baggage in travelling, and not trust to the tender mercies of a chambermaid, or the honesty of officials, generally, even if I must go to the "captain's office." And when the "*ladies'* cars" are so filled by men that I can get a seat nowhere, *shall* take one in the smoking-car, and be deaf to all hints which imply that my presence there is *improper*, inasmuch as it prevents some of the "*stronger* sex" from indulging in their usual and *necessary* recreations of gambling and smoking. All *this*, and a good deal more of the same sort, I *vote* to do, and shall do it. Other women can act as they please; I wait not for theirs, or any *man's* decision, permission, or approval. Can I wait? Have I time? Has

any man or woman time to ask what are his rights? Must not *necessity* or, rather, Providence determine. I am sick of this puling talk in both men and women about false position. False position! Who put you there? Aye, I know what you will answer: "Command of parents, or circumstances, or necessity." Well, if these reasons be true in either case (I say it reverently), God put you there, for He says, "Children, obey your parents;" and He controls circumstances and necessity. Then how dare you talk of false position, if the position be given you by the all-wise; if the hand which guided you to it be His who is called "*the* Truth"? But rarely do parents *command*, though they may *influence*, children in the choice of their life-work; and, as to the other plea, how often do we let pride, wilfulness, indolence, and want of decision control us, and call *them* circumstances and necessity. Ah! men and women, you want to be somebody — to gain name and fame — to be placed on the summit of the hill without climbing — to get your

rights by loud talk, which costs nothing; and make no sacrifice of pride, or temper, or self-indulgence to do so. Then this talk of rights and false positions is often an effort, — and a mighty poor one, too, — to excuse the half-hearted manner in which we discharge duties.

"If anything is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well." What business have we to be half-hearted in anything?

"He that is born, is listed: life is war."

Woman! because you happen to be intellectual and cultivated, — yet choosing to marry a man in modest circumstances, and to surround yourself with home joys and home cares, you do not find so much time for literary pursuits as in your girlhood, — are you to neglect your duties as wife and mother, and excuse yourself by the old plea of *uncongenial pursuits?* Shall you dare talk of having no time to improve your mind? I know a noble woman, with more intellect and culture than most of you, who, married to a farmer, and with but

"one maid of all work," is spoken of for her thrift, and management, and industry throughout the "country side." Yet this woman finds time for a large correspondence, for much general reading, and intellectual social converse with husband, children, and guests. Few women are as well posted; and few can talk as well on every subject. "Well," you answer, "she is a *remarkable* woman, and should not be given as an instance." But that is just the reason why I do give her as one. If *you are* a remarkable woman, you can do the same; and, if you are *not*, do not prate about your intellect and *rights;* you have quite as many of the latter as you can *keep* and *use*. It is not from among rich women of leisure that our great and useful women usually come. Those *best* known to fame have most always been women who have written, or thought, or acted in odd minutes stolen from necessary recreation. You have only to read Hannah More's biography, or acquaint yourself with the early literary efforts of our own Mrs. Hale, to ascertain the truth of

my assertion. No, no; women do not talk of want of time, when you can find time to dress, and visit, and gossip.

And YOU, strong man! whose life, so far, has been a failure for want of energy, decision, or (worse still) moral courage. Do not tell me of your false position and "unappreciated genius," or, putting on a Byronic air, talk bitterly of women and blighted hopes; intimating that *some woman* has to answer for your failure. Do not come to *me* with such stuff—I don't believe in it. Have you so little of *moral* or intellectual strength even, that the smile or frown of *any* woman should make or mar your life? Ah! many of you have. I know it—I know it only too well. The strongest among you are apt to be Samsons. Yet, should it be so? Would it be so, if you had the best kind of strength?—the strength which lives for something else besides self and selfish passions; which goes on doing its duty, seeking not to be understood or appreciated by any save Him who hath promised a seat on His

throne to "him that overcometh." Oh, men and women! brothers and sisters all! take the *rights* which are yours — which God has given you. Your right to manhood and womanhood, to individuality, to character, to Christianity, to prayer, to heaven. Dare to be yourself and nobody else — your redeemed, Christianized, sanctified self — yet, still yourself. Ape no one. Neither sell nor give yourself body and soul to any mortal. Let no man or woman have power enough over you to change your nature, or make your life a failure. *Alone* you must stand before the judgment bar, and answer for yourself for the life given you to make the most of. And then, too, there is so much to do in this world of ours. We have but *one* life, and there is no time to *talk* of rights and false positions, nor even of failures and misspent time.

Ah! you middle-aged, if your youth has known some great sorrow, and you have been weak or wicked enough to sink into inaction or rush into crime — rise up! "Redeem the time;" you can if you will, for though

"Those wounds men give themselves heal ill,"

still they *do* heal; and the best way to heal *any* wound is to keep it bound up, out of the air; not looking at it often; and by the use of proper food, healthy air, and exercise get the blood in the right condition.

But there comes up the cry from thousands — and it is the war-cry of these *Rights' people* — "What is *my* life-work? What is *my* mission? How shall *I* occupy my time, and expend my energies?" And I answer — that you should be ashamed to have any time to occupy, you strong, healthy people, in a world where there is so much *vice* to put down; so much sorrow to sympathize with; so much suffering to soothe; so many souls to save; and your own salvation to work out with fear and trembling. Aye! even the weak ones, bodily — even for those there is work. For those invalids who, recognizing the hand of God in their physical sufferings, and bearing them with Christian fortitude, yet cry out "My days are past, my purposes are broken off." And I am not about to insult them with the ordinary method

of consolation — shall not tell them that their special mission is to discipline *well* people by trying their patience. I should like to know if *well* people do not try *sick* people occasionally? Shall not attempt to argue the case just now, though it does rather come under the head of *rights;* only ask you to cast up the balance sheet for yourselves, and see if it does not come out "quits."

No, no, friends; these invalids of ours have a higher, a holier mission! It is to sympathize and counsel. Living out of the world as they necessarily must, and feeling nearer to the other than healthy people, their judgment is not so apt to be warped by the customs of society, or the opinions of men. They look at things more as dying men look at them. They have been to

> "The Border Land . . . .
> Where small seemed great as weighed in scales
> Held by God's hand alone,"

and we all instinctively feel confidence in their judgment. Then, too, if they be not very

selfish people, they are glad for awhile to forget their own suffering and contracted life, and are interested in whatever enables them to do so. They are thankful for those other lives so full of romance — so "big with events" — for those other people who have so much to tell; therefore are sympathizing and attentive listeners. Yes, my sick friend, you can have a mission if you will, and a noble one, too. You can feel for the young in their joys and their sorrows; their love-tales will they pour into your ear, being sure of an interested listener; and you who know (who so well) how *little* worth is *pride*, and how *much* worth is *patience*, will counsel the putting down of the former, and the exercising of the latter; and God only knows how many breaches you may heal — how many hearts save from breaking.

And to the broken-hearted and the aged — to those who are already beginning to feel what desolation means — to them you have a special message. Knowing, as you do, how "thin the partition wall" which divides us from

eternity, you can for them lift the veil, and show them the land

> "Where the hidden wound is healed,
> Where the blighted light reblooms,
> Where the smitten heart the freshness
> Of its buoyant youth resumes."

Oh! who has not a mission? Who can say he has no life-work? No one. The only difficulty is that we frequently lack the wisdom, or time, or strength, to accomplish it. "Whatsoever your hand *findeth* to do, do with all your might." If *you* have not the strength or time to finish it, *some one else* will. People do not plant trees, expecting to see them grow to maturity during their own lifetime; they know that they will, perhaps, need the tending and watering of the next generation. And so with your life-work, my friend; sometimes one but finishes another man's work, sometimes but commences for another to finish. Indeed, we are all but doing parts of *one* great work after all — but "clay in the hands of the potter." Doing some *great* thing, or some *little*, as He wills.

Then, too, by sticking to the above text, you can find your *rights*, or, rather, your work, which is what you pretend to mean by *rights*. "Whatsoever your hand *findeth*," — not whatsoever it *seeketh*, for there is a great difference in the meaning of the two words. In *seeking*, "we make search; we pursue; we endeavor to gain." In finding, "we discover; we meet with; reach or attain to; hit on by accident; obtain something lost."

Alas! how many of you *find* your life-work, your rights, close by your own firesides — could get and keep them without even the lifting of your voice, and yet go forth over the world *seeking* a mission! You wear out your forces, and expend your ammunition in maintaining your *right* to your neighbor's field, instead of keeping your powder, armor, and strength for the real "battle of life," and for your true enemies — "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Ah, friends! soldiers on the same battle-field! let us remember *one* thing when we claim and talk of our *rights*, — that other people

have *rights*, too. Let us see to it that we do not infringe upon our brother's *rights*, when contending for our own. I often, when listening to discussions on this vexed question, am reminded of a little incident which happened to me some years since.

Next door to me lived a couple who rejoiced in the possession of several unruly sons. As our yards came close together, these boys were in the habit of annoying my servants in various ways, such as unhooking lines from the fence when full of clean clothes, or snow-balling them when hanging up said clothes. My Biddy bore all with exemplary patience (being good-natured and fond of children), till the following encroachment upon her rights. The young gentlemen, one day in the Spring, chose to play ball so near the line-fence, that every stroke of the bat sent it into our yard; when the oldest and most courageous of the boys would ring our bell, and *demand* the *right* to search for his ball in our yard. Five times the *right* was accorded him through courtesy; but at the sixth,

Biddy (it being washing-day), revolted, and coming into the parlor, said, "Indade, ma'am, I don't want to lave, but I did n't come here to wait on those childer next door. Will the misthress plase to spake to them, for they worritt my life out complately." Thus adjured, I quietly told the "childer" that was the last time he could look for his ball in our yard, as my servant could not be disturbed going to the door every few minutes. Still, the seventh time the ball came over, and the bell rang. I attended to the latter myself, and informed "Young America" that he could not come in; at which he blustered, and said "he guessed he 'd see who had the best *right* to his ball." I told him that I did *not* dispute his *right* to his ball; but I *did* to his looking for it every five minutes in *my* yard, and — shut the door in his face. The ball lay and rotted in one corner of my flower-beds; the boys got another, and it never by any accident landed outside their own precincts.

Friends, do not play ball too near your

neighbor's line-fence; and if by accident it happen to go into his yard, do not *demand* your right to look for it there. *He* may accord you permission through courtesy, provided you do not wear out his patience by too frequent repetition. No, no; keep to your own field — inside your own fence; you will find your rights *there*, and plenty to do without going abroad to seek them.

Finally, to all I would say — to men and women; husbands and wives; parents and children; masters and servants — do not spend time and strength in talking of each other's duty. "Be not busybodies in other men's matters," but "do your own duty in that state of life in which it hath pleased God to call you." Do it bravely, independently, conscientiously; caring not for *man's* censure or approval, but taking the "word of Inspiration" only for your guidance. Quietly and firmly *do right*, trusting to God to take care of the consequences.

THOSE MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.

"There is a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will." — SHAKSPEARE.

AH! how they come to us all! Oftener and with more power to us in middle life. *Might have been! Might have been!* What? And why not? Why a thousand things, and for as many reasons. There is a pathos, a sadness, a whole history in that one sentence. It is a perfect wail over a mistaken, misspent life; misused energies or talents; lost opportunities; friends dead or estranged; health and youth gone. I know that no man ever utters that cry in earnest till his heart has ached, as hearts only ache when the *first* brightness of life has fled. Is not that the

reason why memories have always a strain of sadness in them; because we think of what was, and *what might have been;* and contrast it with what is? Do we ever attain to the life which *might have been?* And why not? I said there were a thousand reasons, and so there are. It may have been our own fault, or some loving chastening from "Our Father's" hand, which has made us and our life what they are, and not what we thought *they might* be.

How much oftener than any other reason is it "the first mistaken impulse of an undisciplined heart?" Ah! Copperfield is not the only man who chose a *Dora* when he might have had an *Agnes*, nor the only one who repented it when it was too late.

Such a man has thoughts, hopes, aspirations, ambitions, which the "child-wife" cannot understand. She may be bright, sweet, and pretty; but she cannot share his disappointments, nor enter into his joys. *He* may have capabilities of greatness and usefulness, and — unwilling to give up his life's aim — is

"Too much with the minister,
Too little with the wife."

And — *then* he is not *happy*. Or, determining to be happy, he gives up youthful hopes and tastes, content to play with "Jip," and feel the pretty arms around his neck, the sweet face looking thanks, and — *then* he is not *great*. Yet there come times in his life when memory brings back all he meant to be, all he meant to do. As he sits alone, dreaming, he sees a woman with an earnest face, who urged him onward, ever. A woman to whom his fame, his usefulness, were dearer than even his dear presence; and who would have thought no toil, no sacrifice, too great which helped him to win the crown.

He is famous now! His brows are crowned with laurel! and *she* — his Agnes, his female Warwick, his "king-maker" — welcomes her hero with that voice, those eyes, that smile, which had been his inspiration. Alas! alas! he dreams! he dreams! He is among *the might-have-beens!* and the voice of his "child-

wife" rouses him to *what is*. Pity him! pity him!

And pity, too, that woman who cannot read "Locksley Hall" without shuddering; who cries out

> "Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!"

That woman who is "puppet to a father's threat," or — want; or who, for her own pride's sake, or any other reason, save true love, binds herself to one who, (not understanding her soul's wants) cuts across those "finer feelings" with which women are so bountifully blessed, or — cursed; which shall I say? Ah! such a woman may have learned to love her husband; for I hold that loving her, and being her husband, she *must*, if he be ordinarily good and agreeable.

And yet — and yet there comes a time — there come many times, let her be as pure and constant as she may, when

> "All too sore the fretful household cares,
> Free of the contrast of remembered things."

A time when trial and trouble come; when things go wrong, and her husband's temper gives way (as all men's do); when her life is not what she dreamt it would be — not what she might have made it; and her love not being of the kind which "strengthens her to brave endurance," she cries out "*it might have been* — oh! *it might have been.*" Or let the man she has married falter in his allegiance — be false to his marriage vows, then — God pity her! God help her! for man cannot. She is a good woman, indeed, whose memory at such a time does not bring back the face of one who was truer — one better loved, who *might have been* — what? Aye! something nobler; something better and greater; perhaps blessed by her love — by her presence. Perhaps his face has met her in the street — has somewhere crossed her path; and it is the face of one not happy, not blessed; and the world speaks of his youthful promise, and what he *might have been;* but for her — then, oh! then — pity her! pity her! for

"I don't think it is such a comfort
One has only one's self to blame."

And to blame, too, in the wrecking or unhappiness of *another life*. *Pride* may enable one to bear one's own pain — one's own trouble; but the failure of another life is a hard burden, sister, and one under which *grace* alone will sustain you. Turn resolutely from the past — from *the might-have-beens* you cannot undo. No man (save your husband, father, or brother) has a *right* to any effort in his behalf except your prayers. Do not, in trying to right *one* wrong, commit a greater. Look only to what you *may* do — to what you *can* do for that other man — your *husband*. *He* has a *right* to every effort you can make to raise him morally — aye, even intellectually; for though you cannot *give* him brains, you can influence him to *use* what he has. Tell me not that

"As the husband is, the wife is."

It is generally just the opposite, at least socially and morally, and sometimes even intellectually.

So try it, sister! try it! You have a great life-work before you! Infuse your husband with noble sentiments, with high aims. What care you if he do "steal your thunder," if it be good thunder, and the world acknowledge it as such? What matters it? It gives you *representation!* and that is all we want; 'tis the height of woman's ambition in *this* age! Besides, you took your husband "for better, for worse;" what right have you to complain because there is more *worse* than *better?* How can you be sure it *might not have been* the same with that other man? Be content; the cross *might have been harder* to bear. And brother, with the "child-wife," be thankful it is no worse. It *might have been* in these days of unfaithful wives. Be thankful that your wife *is* a *child* in innocence, in purity, in truth. Be thankful that she *does* throw her arms around your neck, and *yours only;* and that she does nothing more culpable than draw pictures, and play with "Jip," when she should have been attending to the dinner. You can be *good*, if you cannot be

great. You have chosen your lot, and must abide by it. You can make one little woman happy — one home blessed, if you cannot reform the world.

Reader, these two instances of the many, many *might-have-beens* come the most readily to my musings, being the reasons oftenest given (by both men and women) for failing to be either great or good — this mismating, this uncongeniality. Now either we give it our greatest sympathies, or else condemn as morbid and sentimental the whole matter. *I* can do neither; I am but *musing on facts!* and facts these are, as many a man and woman who reads these pages will testify. I cannot call it sentimental merely, for — ah me! ah me! I have seen energy, and strength, and health, and even principle, give way under such memories. I would counsel and comfort, but not blame, thinking what, under temptation, without grace, we all *might have been.*

But neither do my greatest sympathies go with those men and women who are but reaping

the consequences of their own sowing. I have only to look around me to see other men and women so much worthier, who, though true to all their nobler instincts, yet cry out "It might have been."

I see a business man stop to gaze upon his neighbor's home of luxury, at his carriage, and other signs of wealth. I see him turn away with a gesture of impatience, which many would call envy or avarice. I know it is neither. He is among the *might-have-beens.* He thinks if only the war had not come, or that bank had not broken, how *his* loved wife (whose steps are growing feebler) *might have been* riding in *her* carriage — *might have had* her servants. How his children, instead of dragging along feebly in the hot city through the dog-days, *might have been* luxuriating in fresh air at a pleasant country-seat, or in salt breezes at the sea-side. Do you wonder that for the moment he is unmanned? And shall we not sympathize with him, and respect him, too? with the man whose *might-have-beens* for his loved ones leave no room for selfish regrets?

Or with that woman become famous too late; when the father who would have been proud of her; the mother who would have bathed her aching head, and soothed her unstrung nerves; the brother who would have shared in her pursuits, and partaken of her success, are lying beneath the sod? I see her turn away wearily from the world's applause — from congratulations of *later* friends, murmuring, "*It might have been;* but now — ah!

> "'What avails half life's success,
> No early friends can see or share.'"

Friends, I might multiply instances — your own hearts tell you so. There are childless mothers, whose little ones are safely garnered away from the storms of life, yet who, when they see other mothers, with sons and daughters growing up about them, cry out "It might have been."

Oh, those dead! our children, our parents, brothers, sisters, friends!

"How doth Death speak of our beloved,
When it hath laid them low?
. . . . . .
It takes each failing on our part,
And brands it in upon the heart
With caustic power and cruel smart.
The small neglect which may have pained,
A giant stature will have gained,
When it can never be explained.
The little gift from out our store
Which *might have* cheered some cheerless hour,
. . . . . .
But never will be needed more!"

Surely, if we have hearts, for us all are these *might-have-beens.* Sometimes they come to us with overwhelming power years after our loss. Indeed, as years go on, and one by one is taken from our love — our care; as our graves thicken, and the seats in our households, the friends of our hearts grow less, how, at times, the longing to live again the past — to turn the *might-have-been* into *it was* — becomes almost painful. And if this longing, this heart-breaking makes us patient and loving with every little child, tender and attentive to every gray head, and lovingly regardful of those friends

left us, why, then, it is *not* a mere morbid sentimentalism; it is a feeling for which to thank God. But we have our *living* as well as our *dead*. There are lost minutes, and unsaid words, and unwritten letters. There is the letter which never reached its destination, or came too late. The letter which contained foolish gossip, or foul slander, which separated hearts. Oh! the seemingly little things which change our whole lives! Sometimes they are almost ludicrous in their very sadness.

We scarcely know whether to laugh at or be sorry for the political candidate who *might have been* fêted, caressed, and serenaded as the people's idol; but who, by the loss of a few votes, becomes a by-word in men's mouths, is abused by the press, and burnt in effigy by the boys. Then the man who *might have been* a hero and a patriot, but who, by the loss of a battle, becomes a rebel, a prisoner, and a criminal. Or he who *might have been* a monarch, but who, by the birth of a wee baby, remains a subject.

Ah! 'tis sad, and 'tis funny! How I pity you all! how I pity myself! how I pity fallen human nature, which is ever crying out *it might have been!* Ever uttering it in sadness, almost in murmuring against a wise Providence which has withheld blessings, taken friends, or permitted us to waste opportunity and talent, and fall into error.

If we would only feel instead

> "That we may be always
> What we might have been,"

and gather up our energies for another struggle in the years that we may still call ours.

But in our *might-have-beens*, how often we are mistaken. We imagine that we might have been rich, or great, or famous, or happy, under certain circumstances; and we may not have been any such thing at all. We may have needed failure to give us wisdom; study to give us wit; trial and suffering to develop us; and losses enough to make us thankful for blessings left us.

How many fine poems, great works of fiction, or any books which speak to the heart; how many great statesmen and philanthropists; how many of our finest, strongest, best men and women, think you, do we owe to *those might-have-beens?* I doubt much if a man can be great without them; and so would thank God for them, as I would for the rain which makes my flowers grow, and my trees bear fruit.

Then, too, why not use these *might-have-beens* in another and happier sense? In thankfulness for what has been spared us. For the suffering, and trial, and sin, and loss which *might-have-been,* and — *are not.* We might have been homeless, friendless, outcast, penniless, and hopeless, or — dead, dead without hope. Ah! we who have firesides and friends left, and know where to get "our daily bread," and have been permitted to commit no great crime; we who are living, loving, hoping men and women in a free land,— in a land where the cross is planted,— let us look up with radiant faces when we say "It *might have been.*"

PATCHWORK.

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn; good and ill together." — SHAKSPEARE.

I HAVE not the slightest intention, dear madam, of giving you any new devices for patchwork — look in "Godey's" for them. Have no passion that way; and if I had, could not gratify it, for the very best of reasons — want of material.

My poor patchbox has so many demands upon it to supply patches for the numerous silk, worsted, and cotton quilts; for the afghans, chair-covers, sofa-pillows, etc., etc., of all my friends and acquaintances, that it is always in an exhausted condition.

I suggested to a young friend (not long since) that the roll in my hand contained

pieces of a dress just finished. "Oh!" was the answer, "nobody wants so many; just give me a piece or two."

Friends, I am not remarkable for my meekness, but there is such a thing as philosophy; so concluding if she did not get them, some one else would, I yielded. And now, if you can find anything in the poor old box, excepting a roll of Canton flannel, one of black cloth and another of white, some old ribbons, and stuff out of which to make iron-holders, why you may have it (I was going to say); but, on second thought, think I will keep it myself, and learn how to make patchwork. Not the old-fashioned sort (I learned to do that in childhood), but the kind they make now, of pretty curtain calico, cut up into little bits, and sewed upon white muslin; or pieces of silk or worsted, of every conceivable shape, fitted together like a Chinese puzzle.

I am actually willing, at my age, to attempt acquiring this accomplishment, as a penance for fibbing; and my worst enemy could not

wish me any greater punishment, as it seems to me one of the most disagreeable ways of "killing time;" yet, if any of my middle-aged sisters cannot "occupy their time," or you girls cannot find sufficient upon which to expend your energies, I advise you, by all means, to make patchwork; it is certainly more harmless than either gossip, dissipation, or "Women's Rights' Conventions," if not more useful.

But this particular quilt which set me musing, was of the old-fashioned sort, and made by a dear little woman who never had "any time to occupy," and did not know what "ennui" meant, though she did read French. As I was lying on the lounge one day, she threw it over me, saying, "There, darling, I had intended making a large quilt; but wanting to have nothing in it except bits of the worsted dresses of our mother and sisters, and scraps of the vests and wrappers of our father and brothers, was obliged to make you an afghan instead of what I first intended; for it was impossible to preserve my original pattern, and not

go out of the family for material, as people do wear such sober colors now-a-days."

I could truthfully assure her that I abhorred large patchwork quilts (preferring white spreads), but did like her pretty afghan — then fell to musing over the article itself, and the loving intent of the design, the loving wisdom in its completion. Ah! I thought if we would all learn in any work, in little matters, or in our life-work, if we cannot do as well as we would, do as well as we can. If circumstances, material, and time prevent us from doing great things, be content to do little things. If we cannot make a large quilt, make an afghan; and ten to one the small work is more needed, better appreciated than the larger one would have been.

Even "our Father in heaven" loves better a little deed *finished* with loving intent, than a great one *attempted* from selfish motives.

Improve your one talent. Better do a small work well than a large one badly. If your bright colors, your talents, wit, energy, wealth, beauty, health, and character are not sufficient

to lighten a large circle, to make your influence widely felt, thank God for the smaller sphere which you can brighten, and so expend the brightness that (like the bright colors in my afghan) it make the whole work so pleasing, one forgets the scarcity of the material in the result produced.

How Scripture upholds and encourages the doing of what we call *little things*. Is there any blessing pronounced upon great talents, or brilliant deeds? It is "the pure in heart, the peace-maker, the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, and those which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," who are blessed. It is the giving "a cup of cold water" which meets the reward; and the widow's mite which is commended.

Our Saviour said of Mary, "she hath done what she could," and does he expect more from *us* than that? Let us all do what we can, and what we can best do. Let us look at ourselves as we look at others — look at our circumstances and capabilities.

We all know, well enough, when our neighbor has mistaken his calling, when his ambition has gone beyond his capability; could tell what he was fitted for, and appoint him his life-work. Shall we know less about ourselves? Shall we not begin in middle age, at least, to scan our lives, to see what we are making of them?

Ah! that quilt (as I lie looking at it) how like my life — how like everybody's life it seems.

The intention, evidently, was to have half of every block gay and bright; relieved and made brighter by the sombre hues of the other half; but the bright colored material giving out, only in the centre blocks was the original plan strictly preserved. The gay colors became less and less, till along the outer edge the blocks boasted only a little bright spot in the centre. And is not that just like life? In our youth half sunshine, half shadow — the shadow only making the sunshine seem the brighter.

Then there comes a day when the darkness deepens — when there is more of it. There is

just that time in all our lives, between youth and middle age, when, though there is still much sunshine left, we see only the shadow, as I do now those pieces of mourning goods which mark the deaths in our household. They set me thinking of the one for whom such and such a garment was worn. My loss comes back in all its power: the dead face, the coffin, the darkened house, the vacant place in our home and hearts, that one little strip of black brings back to me. Think you my tears will let me *see* the pieces of red merino alongside, or *care* for them? Yet the child who wore the bright dress lives to bless and love me.

And just so it is in early manhood and womanhood. We are not used to such *deep* shadows; it seems so terrible to think that they deepen with our years, that our tears flow so freely we cannot see the brightness left us.

But there comes a time when the one bright spot is made much of, and all the darkness and shadow is not seen. Yes, friends, on the "outer edge of life," how far a small attention—a little

pleasure goes. It is said that old people, like children, are pleased by *little* things; and so they are; but why? Because, alas! they have only *little* things to please them. All *great* things have passed out of their lives, except *great shadows*, *great griefs*, *great pains*. Like the outer edge of my afghan, it is all grave and dark around, and the little spots of brightness here and there stand out in "bold relief," so bright — so very bright.

But there are middle-aged blocks too. Look at those sober colors, which my little friend regretted "people would wear." Did she know, I wonder, that there is a time when we wear them inside as well as outside. A time when

> . . . . . "In this world of ours
> The dreadful commonplace succeeds all change,"

and even the shadows have not the power to move us they once had. When we take what there is of sunshine in our lots quite calmly; if we be Christians, taking it thankfully, but knowing and feeling that life is too real, too earnest, too short to be spent in useless repining over

trouble or ecstacy over pleasure. These are, or should be our working-days; and the hours fly so fast that bright ones do not last, and sorrowful ones, we know, will soon end in that land where

"There is no *broken* sunshine."

Yes, yes; our life *is* all *patchwork*. And so are we, if we do not put it in words; we get to feeling it, after awhile, in middle life. Our deeds, our work, ourselves made up of patches — partly good, partly bad.

Some one has said that "the world was divided into three classes, — the good, the bad, and the Beecher family." *I* do not believe in the classification; there is more *patchwork* in this world than the "*Beecher family*," for what a strange compound human nature is, at its best. What queer medleys we men and women all are! We are like nothing else in the world but *patchwork*. Gay streaks and grave ones; delicate tints and vulgar coloring; pure white spots and those as black as night. Our smiles and tears lying closely together, our *good* deeds

and *bad* ones side by side. One moment with thoughts so beautiful, so noble, so full of poetry that they link us to angels; and the next instant becoming of "this earth earthy," sink almost to the level of brutes in absorbing care for our mortal bodies, and in the indulgence of sensual appetites.

But there is a great difference in people; though they are *all patchwork*, *it* is not all alike. Just contrast those two blocks yonder. The one nearest, with all the colors so artistically, or rather so properly arranged — so according to rule. It will bear criticism — it looks nicely, and is pleasant to the eye at first sight, but after awhile one gets tired of it. It *is* pretty to look at, but you take it all in at a glance; you see nothing new in a second look at it, so turn for relief to the one beyond, with its fitful lights and shadows — its colors all thrown in without regard to order. There is no gradual shading, but blue and red side by side, and a light stripe where you expected a dark one — startling one by its strong contrasts.

It will not bear criticism at all, but it will bear study — it interests one. The first seems to me like some people who are "gotten up" according to "Gunter." Those proper people who dress, walk, talk, and write by rule, who never transgress any law of etiquette. Miss Bremer says that "we are *all* somewhat related to chaos." She should have excepted proper people — *they* certainly are not. To be sure, I cannot tell from personal experience, but one would think, to look at them, that there never was a time when they had the least doubt as to what was proper, either in action or speech; when they had longings or cravings which could not or ought not to be gratified.

There was a time when I both envied and hated proper people (don't be shocked, reader). I do neither now; only rate them at their just value, as nice people of whom one soon gets enough, like the artistic block in my quilt. One knows so well just what they will do or say about people, or books, or under certain circumstances; and I would give anything,

almost, to startle them out of their proprieties, or catch them in *déshabillé*.

I once saw a young lady in such distress at the loss of a near relative, that she alarmed the household by going into spasms; yet she managed to keep her new suit of mourning (veil and all) in perfect preservation the whole time; and not even a stray lock escaped from her fashionable chignon. It was the greatest triumph of propriety over feeling that I ever witnessed, or ever want to. And yet, my friends, there is something nice about these proper people. They never shock one by loud tones, even when they say disagreeable things; they do it with the softest and gentlest accent imaginable. They never startle one by advancing pretty little heresies, as other people do: still, I like some of these other people better. These people with the fitful lights and shadows; who come out bright when you are not expecting it; who are full of strong contrasts, and who interest you because you do not take them in at a glance. They often transgress all human laws

of beauty, both in appearance and character. They write and say queer things, are forever feeling after the truth, asking strange questions, and propounding stranger theories. They are full of what a friend of mine calls "queerities." They are always going astray, and always repenting; and I often wonder whether He to whom Abraham, and David, and Peter, and Paul were so dear, has not chosen these people, so full of strong contrasts of light and shade, to do a special work in this world. They certainly exert the most power, the most influence, and for very good reasons. In the first place, there must be strength of character — originality to produce strong contrast. When I speak of strength, I mean strength of principles, strength of feeling, strength of purpose. And here comes in the question: "Can people *feel* without showing it either in action or speech?" I think not, especially if a strong will and strength of principle go with it. There is much said and written about self-control, and repression of feeling; and it is all very well when it happens to be

bad feeling. We should control bad passions; we should not have bad feelings; though if we do show them, let us do it in speech rather than action. The Bible says, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is a gospel utterance and a gospel truth, that feeling will show itself, and — I believe it. There may be people who, from the force of circumstances, or from education, have learned to control deep feeling, so that one scarcely knows they have any; yet even they (having a smouldering fire beneath) must, like a volcano, sometimes, in the course of years, have an irruption.

Yes, the heart will speak out; and thank God that it does, that the thousand other hearts waiting to be spoken to, do not wait in vain. Do not wonder, then, that I say (in the second place) that feeling begets feeling. Have you never felt it when you listened to an eloquent speech, or read a thrilling poem? Has not the strong expression of feeling in the orator or poet stirred the blood within you till you were roused to do or dare anything for the cause

advocated? I am not stopping to inquire whether the cause be right or wrong; that has nothing to do with the fact; and (as stated before), I am only musing on facts — not discussing either politics or religion.

We all know that it is so patent a fact that those who write and speak strongly, and of course feel strongly, exert the greatest power, that men, in all time, have been afraid of the influence of certain books and certain people.

Ah, my friends, believe me that it is those other people, with the fitful lights and shadows, who rouse us, who gain power over us, whether for good or evil; who stir the world, and either upset or reform it, who hold nations in check, and whom God uses either to advance his cause in this world, or to scourge his people for their sins.

But what in the world ever makes people wear those horrid washed-out colors? Not good, respectable grays, or browns, or greens, or blues, but a mixture of all, faded out; sometimes one predominating, sometimes another —

a kind of "water-gruel color." I suppose they really are worn for economy; they should be cheap. Remember to have possessed a dress of that sort myself, once; and of being much bothered as to what color it ought to be trimmed with, not knowing what it was most like. Finally (concluding to put on something as unlike itself as possible) chose cherry — and it actually looked well. I thought then, and do still, that it was a wise choice, and that "water-gruel" people would do well to profit by the suggestion.

For there are "water-gruel" people in this world. Those undecided, washed-out individuals, both in appearance and character; neither pretty, nor ugly, nor sharp, nor sour, nor sweet, nor smart, nor stupid; who have just sufficient brains to entitle them to a place in society, and the right to be entertained; but not enough to know that those who do entertain them should be ranked among the martyrs. So, as I said, they should be trimmed with cherry. They should live with bright, decided people; who have so

much character that it throws a pleasant glow all around, lighting up those colorless ones, and startling them out of their indifference. Then, too, (though nature cannot be entirely changed,) we human beings have powers of assimilation and imitation, which often answer pretty well in the place of brains.

Not alone is it our individual life, and the people *in the world;* but the *world* itself is one great piece of PATCHWORK. Aye, these patches of light and shade in nature, how beautiful they are! How the eye delights to gaze on this mingling of green and brown! Look at that glorious old elm-tree yonder, with its rough bark and verdant leaves; at the *green* grass along the road-side; at the *brown* cottage covered with *verdure;* and, dearer than all, the rustic stile, and "the old oaken bucket," with patches of moss upon them.

Then there are patches of land and patches of water. There is the "green, green sea" and the blue, blue lake; the little brook and the big river; the calm, clear stream and the rushing

mountain torrent; and once I saw a river as black as any patch in my afghan. Alas! I fear it has been, since then, as bright as that scarlet merino yonder—bright with the blood of some of our best and bravest, both North and South.

But how I love these patches of warm valleys, rugged mountains, and great gray rocks! How I want to fall down and embrace them! And as for that great block above us, with its fitful lights and shadows; well—(it did not startle me quite as much as it should, that idea in "Gates Ajar," of the child having the clouds to make blocks of), because, when a child myself, I used to lie on my back on the grass, and, looking up, wonder if, when I went to heaven, God would let me have the clouds to play with; thinking, meanwhile, what pretty *patchwork* they would make. If "the truth, and the *whole* truth," must be told, I have not gotten entirely over that youthful illusion yet. It is at sunset that the fit oftenest takes me. I sit and look at those beautiful dissolving views, and do not want a "piece of the moon," but a

piece of that changing, fleeting cloud. It fades; it has gone. I draw my breath, and ask myself why we human beings are so afraid of strong contrasts, when God deals so bountifully in them. *He* puts pink and blue side by side, and yellow and green, and flings all the colors together in His "bow of promise," and His glorious sunsets. But man, poor man, can have only one idea at a time, or at best two; and they must be as like each other as possible.

I once heard a lady say that a carpet which contained more than two colors, she did not consider genteel. Of course, I did not ask how she would like one made of sunset clouds or autumn leaves, fearing the idea would be lost; but confess (privately) that *I* would, (provided it would wear well.)

In a former chapter of this book, I mentioned sitting by the window whilst the snow beat against the pane, and I shiveringly drew my shawl around me. Since then winter has given place to spring, the snow has melted before the showers of April, flowers have budded and

blossomed, and *now* midsummer is here. The thermometer ranges between eighty and ninety, and I close the shutters to keep out the sun and flies. Then it grows dark, and I push them open just in time to see the great black cloud, before the flash comes to lighten it. The thunder rolls; the rain falls in torrents; and the thirsty earth drinks it up gladly. The birds twitter home to their nests and their younglings, the trees hold up their heads refreshed, and a fresh "earthy" smell comes into my window as I lean out to watch it all. Presently the clouds break away, the blue sky shines through, and the July sun forces me to shut out the scene; the while musing — 't is PATCHWORK *all* — these winters and summers; this snow and rain; this cold and heat; these shadows and sunshine. Ah! *all, all.* These burning deserts and green oases; this strong oak with the fragile anemone at its root; this burly beast of the field and delicate fowl of the air; this rose amidst its thorns; and this Southern jessa-

mine, so full of sweetness and beauty, forming thickets in which venomous reptiles hide.

Believe me, friends, that this *patchbox of nature* is so full of patches, it can never be exhausted (like *mine*) by forays made upon it. No, no; this whole world of patchwork-makers — these preachers, orators, poets, writers of any sort who draw upon it for bright colors with which to lighten their (otherwise) "water-gruel" writing — can never exhaust it. What should we do without it? What should we do in *art* without *nature?* Talk of *originality* — man's originality of thought! Is it not a reproduction of God's great thoughts? Does not the artist paint what he has seen, or heard, or felt, whether it be sunset clouds, or ocean, or sky, or beast, or portraiture of grief or joy, or love or hate? And why can Shakspeare and Dickens move us to tears or laughter, as they choose; and Young raise us above the fear of death, and make us long for heaven? Because these men have discovered God's great truths, and tell them well.

Yes, yes; with this busy world around us — these scenes which this sunshine falls upon, these shadows hide — have we not enough patches for both painter and poet? Can we take up a daily paper, even, and not meet with this mingling of light and dark in life? Marriages and deaths side by side; births in one column, murders in the next. On one page the account of a party with its lights, dress, and luxury at some "Fifth Avenue" palace; and on another the recital of destitution, crime, and misery at "Five Points."

Aye! look, too, out of that window, and see the boys playing ball, and the girls jumping rope, without a care for the future, but to be "first best" in the game. Then turn your eyes to the other side of the street, and watch that boy and girl (with the basket between them), in their bare feet and ragged clothes, trudging along. They are no older than the players; but their faces are prematurely old and careworn, with that cunning look which youthful battling with the world is sure to give — that look which

the street-beggar always wears, and which pains us to see in children; feeling, as we do, that this soiling of the child-nature is one of the hardest stings of poverty.

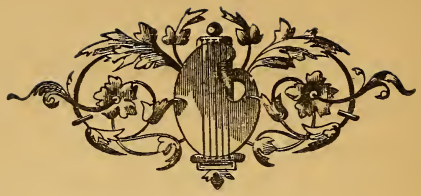
But I cannot tell it all, friends; the thoughtful among you have seen it — do see it both in times of peace and in times of war — this LIFE PATCHWORK. You have seen the spreading of flags to the breeze! have heard the shout of the people in victory! and meanwhile the groans of the dying and the cries of the widow and orphan alongside.

You have seen the hearse with the dead in it going up the street, the car full of living people going down. On the one side of the way the criminal carried to prison or the scaffold; on the other the hero borne in triumph to receive his laurels.

Oh! how this blending of bright and dark confuses me as I write. How this mixture of suffering and enjoying, of sinning and applauding, tries my faith! I throw down my pen, saying, I will not try to reason. I will not think.

. . . . . "In thinking of these things,
Some men have lost their minds, and others may."

I turn for relief to the pretty colors of my afghan flitting before me — light and dark, bright and gay. Some patches ugly to look at, some making me sad, some washed-out; yet all fitting, blending — making together such a pretty, harmonious whole upon which to rest my tired eyes, that I never spread it over me without an inward "thank ye" to the giver. But to-day something more than that has it done for me. It has strengthened my faith. In looking at it, I muse: just so, perhaps, is this *patchwork* of *my* life, of *everybody's* life, of the world and nature, being fitted, blended. There *are* some ugly spots in it — some sad, and dark, and colorless ones; yet can I not trust the great Maker's power and will to so finish *His* work that it shall form a beautiful and harmonious whole, to gladden our eyes when we take our great rest in heaven?



GIRLOLOGY.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." — SHAKSPEARE.

YES, gentlemen: I repeat it, *girlology*. Don't sneer, and, gazing into the air, put on benevolent looks at a woman's mistake, and ask if I know the meaning of *ology*. I can assure you there is no mistake. There is a science of girls; and, moreover, you know nothing about it, and shall therefore be forgiven your scepticism, as you could not be expected to believe in a science of which you are ignorant of the first principles. For you are lamentably ignorant of *girlology*. In the first place, you men who consider it your special mission to keep girls from doing anything improper, and publish it to the world when

they do. In the second place, you other men, who, espousing their cause, are trying to give girls their *rights* whether they will have them or not. I assert distinctly and positively, that neither of you know anything about girlology. Why do you not stick to boys, and keep them straight, and give them their "rights and mission"? I am sure they need some one to advocate their cause — poor little souls! You see, you were boys yourselves once, and know what they like, which is considerably more than you know about girls. Just try it. Tell your little daughter that "her sphere is home" — her mission "to be wife and mother. That, if she wishes to remain womanly, to be admired, and loved, and happy, she must not let her foot step out of that sphere — neither have opinions of her own, nor express them either in speaking or writing."

Just tell her this, and see how many instances she will rattle off of great and good women, too, who did have opinions of their own, and who did their own thinking, and talking, and

writing. Women who found their sphere somewhere else besides home; and whose mission was not to be either wife or mother, and yet who were womanly and happy.

On the other hand, tell her that she is old enough to have some object in life — talk to her as you do to your boys, and propose to her to follow some calling. Do that, and see how she will pout her pretty lips, and answer, "I thought girls were to stay at home and be taken care of. I don't want an object in life; but I would like to go to Mrs. B——'s party next week, if only I had a new dress to wear."

I told you that you did n't know anything about girls, and — you don't. But *I* do, for I was a girl myself once; and if you will profit by my experience, and not let your daughters pull my hair for disclosing secrets, I will tell you a good deal that you don't know. And, girls, don't you get on a "rampage," and ask me why I do not write about boys, and let you alone — that you have been written and talked about quite enough. I tell you that I don't

know about boys — I don't understand boys, and could not be expected to; for I never was a boy. It is a fact that they do queer things as well as you — but why? — there 's the mischief.

I know that the little boys — your brothers — tease you terribly, pull your curls, wash your dolls' faces, drown your kittens, and generally make life a burden to you. Yet they glory in protecting you — will not let other boys snowball you — will fight a dog, or even bull, in your defence — will climb the highest trees to get you nuts and apples; and that you cannot do without these same little teasing, tormenting brothers of yours. I know, too, that those big boys — your lovers — though they like you to be shy and modest, and "chary of your smiles," yet, if you are so, will flirt with other girls, and make your hearts ache. That they say, "a girl has no business to think a man loves her till he tells her so," yet call girls (who act upon that principle) coquettes. But why? but why?

Then there are those older boys — your husbands! They love you better than any one —

will almost worship you, and will choose you out of the whole world. They will *think* and *say* that you are smarter and prettier than any one; yet will neglect you for others, will find fault with you, and will permit others to do so; and will let you be the recipient of their troubles, their temper, and their tyranny? But why, girls? why?

There evidently is *boyology*, too; for the subject has sufficient quirks and "queerities" in it to entitle it to a place among the sciences. It was the study and bother of my childhood, and has been ever since — this trying to understand boys. There is no use, girls, you need not try — you can't do it. I had as good a chance as most of you, and tried hard enough, but now, in middle life, give it up as impossible. They will not tell of themselves — catch them at *that!* They will tell you all sorts of things about girls, which you knew before, and can give a reason for far better than they. But about boys, big or little! Why, even that great character painter, that great truth-teller, Shakspeare,

throws no light on the subject. They will all paint us some great villain — tell us he did thus, and so, but *not why!* Ah, no! I wish that they would, for it would so simplify matters to know what we might expect — to understand the symptoms, to say the least of it. But they don't, and, I suppose, they won't; therefore I come back to girls, whom I *do* understand, and love better in consequence — even with all "*their inconsistencies.*" Inconsistencies! pshaw! all human beings are inconsistent; and girls are consistent with themselves at any rate.

One great difficulty in the study of *girlology* is, that men, and *women*, too, whenever a girl does anything peculiar, eccentric, or blameworthy, call it *unwomanly*, and think they have exhausted the subject; think they have "hit the nail on the *head*," when they have only hit it on the *side*, and driven it half-way in, and crooked at that.

It is, to be sure, a great compliment to womanhood, to girlhood, to say that all un-

pleasant peculiarity, all naughtiness, is unwomanly; implying that woman-nature, girl-nature, is always good and pleasant. It is a great compliment, but — *not* a *great truth.*

An old farmer once said about potatoes, "Taters is taters; but you see there is a *difference* in taters." And so *girls are girls;* but, you see, there is a *difference* in girls. Because a potato is not a good potato — is queer, and somewhat different from that tuber generally — does it cease to be a potato? No, indeed. Potatoes are potatoes, most decidedly; and, what is more, will remain *so*, do what you will with them. Transplant them to other lands and other soils; cultivate them or leave them alone; give them water, and air, and sunshine, or deprive them of these advantages; plant them by themselves, or among corn, or turnips, or beets, or squashes, or onions, still they remain potatoes; still they retain their individuality, and are the one vegetable which no household can do without. And girls, bless their hearts! will do so too. Transplant *them;*

try to change their nature by sending them into the world — even make medical students of them, and give them the run of the hospitals with the men, and still their girlhood will assert itself; they *will* go down a by-way to avoid the impertinent stare of the male students. I think it was mean in those big boys, and just like them; yet I was glad of it; glad of anything which proves that girls cannot unsex themselves, try as hard as they will.

There have been, it is true, women, who, in some great cause, under some strong excitement, or impelled by stern necessity, have faced crowds, or gone into battle unflinchingly, or into the haunts of men, with head erect, and an eye before which impertinence quailed, and the rude jest and sneer were smothered in their birth. But after all, that only proved their individuality — the girlhood, the womanhood within them. Strong impulse, great need, impelled them; and, *woman-like, they stopped not to reason.* They thought not of the propriety of time or place, or of themselves at all. The

great MUST drove them onward, and gave them that true strength and dignity which such inspiration always gives. They were not unsexed! They were *women*, fulfilling their highest, their holiest mission of ministering, succoring, saving. They were doing the work of angels; and was it any wonder that, as they passed with such high, pure purpose written on their uplifted brows, rude, uncultivated men felt their power; bad men reverenced them; and that *all* joined in calling a Joan d'Arc, a Florence Nightingale, and such like, angels indeed? They were angels for the time being, ministering spirits; and so there is a touch of angel nature in all girls! Dickens deserves the thanks of the sex that he has found it out; that he has pictured an Edith Dombey, kept from sin by her great love for Florence; a fallen Martha redeeming herself that she might save "little Em'ly;" and a degraded Nance bearing a blow from the man she loved, for the sake of the child Oliver.

Yet they are very naughty, these girls — like potatoes. A writer says about the latter that

"There is no vegetable so prone to run backwards. Just give him his way, and he goes headlong to ruin as fast as a potato can." And so it is with girls; there is no denying it. They are so strong, so decisive, that they must do something. If you do not help them forwards, they will go backwards. Ah! yes, potatoes and girls are alike in that they want *culture*, and *air*, and *rain*, and *sunshine*, and more sunshine than rain they both want. Give potatoes too much rain and they run to vines, to head — the poor tuber is small and watery, and often hollow-hearted.

Give *girls* too much discipline, and they will grow to head also — the real girl, the *heart*, does not develop. They are sharp, suspicious, and hard.

Give it rain, and sunshine, and air, but no culture, and the *potato* may have plenty both of vines and tubers; but, after all, it is a wild potato, make the best of it. Just so is your girl without culture. She is a thorough girl, with wits and heart all alive, eyes everywhere; but a wild specimen at the best.

What these girls want the most, we give them least of. You say they are vain; and so they are: that they love dress and gayety; and so they do. Why are they vain? Poor little souls! they want love; they want sunshine. Give them plenty of *it*, and see if they will be vain! Are not the plainest girls, the least admired, often the vainest?

Why do they love dress? Partly because they wish to make themselves attractive, and know of no other way to accomplish it; and partly because, from lack of culture, they have nothing else to do. It is the only taste cultivated by either father or mother. Yes, I dare to say it — *father!* Do you not tell your little girl (whose vanity had never gone farther than a clean apron) that, if she will take her medicine, or do something equally disagreeable, you will get her a pretty new dress; and she will look so nice in it, and shall go out to walk with papa; connecting the idea of the new dress with her walk with you till she (poor little innocent!) thinks papa's affections depend

on her dress? And when she is older, you carry on the same game. You like to see her look pretty; you are proud of her; and always take out most with you the prettiest, the best dressed, daughter. Ah! she even gets the most kisses (generally) and the most love.

And, mother, do you not punish your child sooner for soiling her dress than her book? Don't you tell her, when she throws her little arms around your neck in an impulsive embrace, not to rumple your hair, nor your collar? Well, I am no friend to either rumpled collars or hair; but those little soft arms around one's neck — those little fingers fumbling in one's hair, can the want of them be made up to you and me by the most unexceptionable toilet? No! no! Woman, if you have no little fingers to pull your hair down — no little arms to rumple your collar, borrow your neighbor's little girl for that purpose; and, besides the ray of sunshine you will shed on her path, you can never calculate the blessing she will be to you. She will pull down with the hair the years

which separate you from your girlish feelings — your girlhood's home. She will "keep your memory green" of other little fingers, which once loved to be so employed; and of another little heart once as easily made glad; and it will make you gentler towards girlish weaknesses — towards girlish faults. For they have faults, these girls; and yet, as I said before, they all have a touch of the angel-nature in them, which is the reason (I take it) why women are so much worse than men when they are bad. Fallen angels are certainly worse than fallen men; for you know, friends, that the Devil is a fallen angel. Still, do not for an instant imagine that I agree with "Owen Meredith" in supposing that

"The Devil is a woman just now."

Yet I am willing to allow that these little girls are naughty, often *very* naughty. Sometimes the darlings are absolutely vicious, as vicious as young colts; and, what is worse, take real delight in being so — pride themselves

upon being wilful, unreasonable, and uncontrollable. Said a naughty little girl to me once, "I am so bad, nobody can do anything with me. I torment everybody's life out." "Well, my dear," was the answer, "you are not alone in *that*, — a great many girls are the same. If you want to be original and peculiar, try to be *good*, for *good* girls are rarer than bad ones."

She looked up in my face with a gleam of intelligence and amusement in her great gipsy eyes, and asked, "How did you know that?"

Ah! girls, don't I know? Don't I know that, though you are not worse than the rest of us, than all who have the taint, yet, after all, being more guileless and honest than we grown-up people, you come out with the naughtiness, and make yourselves disagreeable? Yes, I know *that;* and know, too, how, when being mistrusted, misunderstood, and unloved, you often do really become naughty and reckless, and think, if you cannot get love and admiration, you will have notoriety at any rate. God

help you that it go no farther! that you do not *try* to *unsex* yourselves, or *succeed* in degrading your own sex and losing your own souls. Oh! dear young friends, be notorious if you will, if you *can*, but be notoriously *great* and *good*.

But there is another reason, girls, why you are so naughty sometimes. How very good some of you would be if you were not so very, very idle. If only those heads and hearts and hands were well employed. Don't tell me it is because you have nothing to do. It is not so. You do not want to do anything; you won't do what lies right in your path; and you may as well acknowledge it. Nine-tenths of you are like an honest little friend of mine, who said that her dream of life was "to swing on the gate, and drink buttermilk." In other words, have fun generally; have all you want, and do nothing useful. You get over it after awhile (sometimes), but not entirely; and there seems always to be a propensity to do everything under the sun but the one useful thing

God intended for you. You are not lazy all of you, nor most of you — oh no! you are "only self-indulgent!" and what is the difference in the result? When you get to be *large* girls, to be "old girls," how those idle habits cling to you. You have not been trained; you have not trained yourselves to work — to work in the best sense of the term. That *heart* of yours has not gone out in sympathy and love for those in your home — those around you. Those *heads* have not worked to any purpose. And those *hands* — alas! alas! they have held to the gate whilst you swung, and that is all. But some of you have brains which cannot be idle; and all have hands, and most of you hearts; for, like potatoes, it is only occasionally that a hollow-hearted one is found among you.

And you get tired of swinging on a gate. The brains wake up. The hands itch to do something. The heart either fastens itself on the first presentable man you meet, or on your own dear self; and, perhaps, you go on through life (if not very useful) at least not unhappy.

But it is a great venture (make the most of it), and the poor heart often gets broken, or frozen, or dried up. Then how those idle brains and hands try to avenge it. How you sink into coquettes, vain and untrue — perhaps become married flirts, or — worse! Or else you rush off into a wicked and useless pursuit of "a mission." You who have never worked, or cared to work in your whole lives, crying out for your *right* to some great life-work (your neighbor's, perhaps), when your own lies undone, untouched, even, beside you. Ah! girls,

> . . . . . "Get work, get work,
> Be sure 't is better than what you work to get."

You cannot be very naughty or very unhappy if you are usefully occupied.

I know how hard it is to get up betimes in the morning, and feel there is nothing before you but work, monotonous work, the same old "tread-mill," day after day. And it comes harder to your *young* natures than to ours; but is it harder than an "eternal round of pleasure"?

There is so much satisfaction in finishing anything; in seeing things grow under one's hands; in even a nice, clean, tasteful room which we have helped to make so; that, upon the whole, I don't pity you much; I don't pity myself that little duties, little cares, make up the sum of most women's lives.

But, "there's a difference in taters" and—girls. A good Peach-Blow is not like a good Mercer, nor a Sweet Potato or Early June like either. They are all potatoes, to be sure; all from the same parent stock originally, and though soil, climate, and culture have made a great diversity in them, and increased the number of species, still, amidst that diversity, they all retain certain characteristics, which unmistakably show them to be potatoes.

Ah! those Peach-Blows, how nice they are—how hard it is to spoil them, and how much more reliable they are than any other potatoes. In a drought, which causes a total failure in other crops, or in a flood which makes other potatoes soggy and good for nothing, they will

be quite mealy and eatable, and bear a pretty good crop. Let a good, industrious, intelligent farmer plant them, and hoe and cultivate them as only a *good* farmer can or does, and they produce (in a good season) large quantities of great, magnificent tubers, fair to look upon, and pleasant to the taste. Or, let a poor farmer get hold of them and neglect them, still they will look nice, and are very passable potatoes. Then "the rot" rarely touches them; they are very seldom hollow-hearted; and scarcely any kind of cookery will spoil them, provided they are cooked enough — and they do need more cooking than any potatoes that I ever tried.

And Peach-Blow *girls* ditto. *They* have hearts, most decidedly; but they are not very soft, and need the application of a good deal of heat to make them so.

How nice and pleasant these girls are — how yielding and gentle they seem. One would suppose them easily affected by either love or hate, censure or approval. But just try them,

and see if they are not as hard as a Peach-Blow potato. Yet, like these same potatoes, they cannot be readily spoilt by either adversity or sunshine. They are pleasant through everything; pleasant to look at; pleasant to talk to; pleasant to be with. Their feelings are not quick or keen enough to render them disagreeable or exacting. They have much *gumption* and tact, but their intellects are not of that higher order which makes of them thinking and inquiring girls, who sometimes are unpopular. No, no — this style of girl is very popular, even as a little girl. "Mamma" likes her because she never asks unanswerable questions nor rumples her collar. "Papa" approves of her because she is self-possessed in society and yielding at home. Teachers like her because she is not naughty, nor restless, nor inventive in tormenting. And, when she grows up, how the beaux like her! how they break their hearts for her! — no, I did n't mean *break*, I meant *bruise*, for it is not often men break their hearts for a Peach-Blow girl. And,

bless you, as for *her* heart, the darling! does *it* ever get broken? Not a bit of it. She will talk softly and gently to you of woman's sphere and affections — will raise her eyes to your face with a look which acknowledges your superiority, and appeals to your protection, till you think yourself the *one* man in the world to her, and yet — ask her to marry you. Ten chances to one, she will say (with drooping eyelids) that "she is very sorry, but she cannot love you — will you not be her friend." Or, if *you* prove false and unworthy — if you play the jilt — you need not pity "the poor little soul." She will not lose many nights of sleep — not she. She will look interesting, and the world will talk of her fortitude and resignation because she don't break her heart — but she *won't.* No, no; *her* heart is made of "sterner stuff;" it will not even freeze or dry up; and I think she is right — if she can do it: I quite approve of her.

Yet this class of girls is not the highest style by any means. On certain soils, with

certain culture, noble women are developed from among them; still, inasmuch as the physical generally predominates in them, they are not the sort which we ever, for a moment, think of as angels. But I don't know; perhaps, if their hearts were hammered on, melted —cooked enough when young—they might be more angelic.

And here I am met by the remark, "But we don't want angels, we want women."

Well, just as you choose—I don't object; only I *do* think it would be nice to have these girls of ours little "ministering spirits" in our homes. *I* would like them to be something more than pleasant and agreeable, and nice looking, and nice behaved. If there happened to be one of these Peach-Blow girls in *my* home, I should try my best to soften her heart, awaken her sympathies, quicken her impulses, and teach her to love me well enough to give me a good hug and kiss regardless of appearances — regardless of consequences.

Friends, I like Peach-Blow potatoes, and buy

them, generally; but it is only because I cannot get *good Mercers*. Don't tell me that the former are just as good as the latter: I know better. I ate Mercers years ago, before "the rot" became so prevalent; when Mapes and everybody else said that they were the best sort of potatoes; when no farmer who thought anything of his reputa ion would be without them; when old housekeepers felt insulted if market women asked them to buy anything else.

Ah, how nice and mealy they were! How white — how delicate to the taste if boiled just right, or if roasted in ashes.

Those were days when farmers used hoes instead of cultivators, and were not afraid to work. Of course I don't *know*, but it does *seem* to me that, if the soil were properly prepared, and they were put in just right, and thoroughly cultivated afterwards, we might have good Mercers *now* as well as formerly. I know that they are more easily affected by either a too dry or too wet season than most varieties; that "the rot" has a particular fancy for them,

at which I don't wonder; for if *it* be little insects, as some horticulturists insist, they certainly show good taste. If man's *taste* only rivalled his *indolence*, he would make more effort to reclaim from these little epicures this delicious tuber for his own use. I insist upon it that they are worth taking extra trouble about; and so are *girls of the Mercer type, too.*

Don't you know the sort? To be sure you do; for though they are not so plenty as Peach-Blows, yet we have all seen them, and are sure to know them. They are so distinctive, have so much individuality, that we can never mistake them.

As the Mercer *potato* has a tendency to run to vines, so the *girl* has to run to brains — to have opinions of her own and express them, and is, consequently, not popular. Then, how impulsive she is — how regardless of consequences! How restless and troublesome, and awkward, and *malapropos* as a child she is — how hard to train, and how (like Mercer potatoes) she is not liked because she is trouble-

some, and is often neglected and uncultivated. So (poor little soul!) she trains herself by asking all sorts of questions; by reading all sorts of books; by forming violent friendships with peculiar people; and by doing all sorts of odd things generally. How she shocks you all by her Quixotic endeavors to right her friends, relieve the oppressed, and reform the world.

Her *heart* is very soft and tender; she is "sweet at the core;" but the world does not know it — even her lovers do not dream of it; for she is a proud little minx, and carries a high head and flashing eye. She does not "stoop to conquer," — not *she*. No! no! — she is a "born princess," and will be wooed.

If the man who has won her love "dare" neglect her, and she hear aught against his constancy, which his own actions confirm, then — pity both! How she will trample on her own heart and crush out its love, till heart and nerves — yea, almost life itself — give way under the pressure. But the head is just

as high, the lip as smiling, and the step firmer than ever. Meanwhile, the lover votes her heartless; thinks she never loved him; and "they lose each other on the sea of life, drifting forever further and further apart, beyond reach of look, or tone, or cry of anguish." Then, if she be the *one* woman in the world to him, she is avenged as she never meant or wished to be — for men have been known to *break* their hearts, or have their lives blighted, out of love for *such* girls.

I suppose that I ought to feel sorry for *him*, and condemn *her:* she had no business to be so proud; that (according to the accepted meaning of the term) it would be more *womanly* to do so. But "doctors differ;" *I* think it would be *more womanly not to do so*, inasmuch as I am a woman myself, and would naturally lean to the girl-side of the question, especially when I consider how easily Mercer girls are spoilt. Ah! there is so much of the angel in those great, high-strung, unselfish, loving natures, that I tremble for what they may become through

doubt, neglect, or wrong. That if planted on a cold, clay soil, with defective culture, and they have too much rain and too little sunshine, "the *rot*" will overtake them; and then! Perhaps they are only touched, and still are white and pure at heart; but the mealiness, the sweetness, is gone, and they become outwardly hard, sharp, and indifferent.

But if the disease be bad, and the whole heart turn black — what then? Why, then, let us speak it softly, mournfully, as we whisper of the death of loved ones, yea, as we tell of the wreck of some noble ship, let us tell of this greater human wreck, this woman-heart in ruins. This woman becomes desperate, cruel, almost fiendish. I verily believe that our worst women come from this class — and so do our best. They are the strongest natures, and capable of the greatest extremes. They rarely, if ever, lose their virtue — they are too proud and unyielding for that; but they become Rosa Dartles, and Charlotte Cordays, and Helen McGregors.

Like the best-blooded horses, they have the most mettle, and (even as children) show it. They are the girls who have most temper; and it *is* naughty, very naughty, I would not encourage them in it. But "deal gently" with them, for with such girls "I, at least, know no way of fighting with what is wrong, like helping everything good and true to grow."

How love and trust, good air, good soil, and right culture develop them! The warm, unselfish impulses become right principles; the recklessness, moral courage; the restlessness, energy in a good cause; the pride, self-respect; and the strong will, Christian firmness and endurance.

They are "of the stuff from which martyrs are made." Not those alone spoken of "in history and in song," but *household* martyrs, too. They who are stretched on the rack for years instead of days; who bear more than one burning; who themselves guillotine their most cherished tastes, their dearest hopes, for love or duty's sake, yet never *ask* nor *get* the world's applause or pity. And they need it

not. They are self-sustained, because God-sustained; and never lean but on OMNIPOTENCE.

Reader, have you never felt that there were some things, and some people, which you would have liked a great deal better, if the reality had not fallen short of your expectations? If it had not been for the humiliating feeling that you were cheated — imposed upon? If so, you felt just as I did the other day, when, buying (as I thought) Mercer potatoes, I got Blue-Noses instead, and never found out my mistake till they came to be peeled.

Angry don't begin to express my feelings. I was beside myself — raving. Declared that I had been cheated, and that the man should take them back.

In vain did my cook say that "they were pretty good potatoes."

My expectations were of good, old-fashioned, white, mealy *Mercers;* and I would not be satisfied with anything less. One member of the family suggested that, having bought the pota-

toes myself, I ought to have known what I was buying. I turned upon him fiercely. "How should I, a woman, know the difference between a Mercer and a Blue-Nose with the skins on? Don't they look just alike till they are peeled? But they are not alike. The latter is only an imitation of the former, and I hate all imitations — all pretensions." As I stopped to take breath, he went on coolly: "No, they are not alike, not even with the skins on. A Mercer (if good) is the same shade all over; but a Blue-Nose is darker in spots, generally at one end, and is very inferior in taste to the former; yet, being easier of cultivation than Mercers (as they are not so readily affected by either wet or dry weather, or the rot), farmers like them better."

Of course, reader, they like them better because they are less trouble, and so give us a poor imitation instead of the genuine article, and have the audacity to call them *Blue* Mercers. I, for one, don't mean to stand it! T'is a foul slander on the *real* Mercer, and a great imposition on us.

But, as bad as the *potato* imitation is, the *girl* imitation is worse; when it comes to that, I have no words for my indignation.

I like everything in the shape of a girl — it is my greatest weakness. The little chits themselves know it, and impose on me; and all my friends take advantage of it. They are constantly coming to persuade me to engage in some "woman's mission," or "girl's industrial school," or to subscribe to some female orphan or blind, or something or another, asylum. They know they are hitting my weak point — my hobby. And yet, friends, there *is* a girl — this *imitation* girl — who excites my direst wrath, and it is because she is not genuine, not honest. It is such a mean, cowardly fault, this attempting, this pretending to be something different from what one is — this hoisting of false colors.

Run up your *own* flag, girls, even if it be black, and let us know where you stand. But it is not black; oh! no; only a little streaked.

You have some brains, occasionally a good deal of talent, and if you would only be satis-

fied with *that*, and not pretend to so much sentiment, and impulse, and intellect, I should like you better. You are very nice girls, and capable (under culture and pressure) of achieving considerable. But do not put on absent-minded airs, and be slovenly in your dress, and behave as if it were impossible for you to bring your minds down to sewing and household duties. It is of no use. Those of us who understand as much about *girls*, as my friend did about potatoes, know (even before you are peeled) that you are *not* Mercers. If you were, you would be ashamed of your natural failings — would blush at them, instead of talking about them; would make the most desperate efforts to dress like other people; and be more proud of making a good loaf of bread, or a really pretty apron than — of writing a book.

Then, too, though Mercer girls care little for dress, I doubt their being more slovenly than other people; or that they look down with contempt on household affairs. I deny both facts.

Also that they are absent-minded, for, like Mercer potatoes, they are *all eyes*, and know and see everything that is going on.

You court observation, too, either in joy or sorrow; and if you were *real* Mercers, you would feel too keenly to have your sores touched by everybody. You would cry out,

> . . . . . "Being observed,
> When observation is not sympathy,
> Is just being tortured."

Even in love or marriage, you cannot be honest. You *do* love sometimes; for you *have* hearts, though they are so streaked through with worldly wisdom and policy that they are not always either as tender or white as we would have them. So, often when love *is* your only motive, you talk (very piously) about the leadings of Providence, and how your sphere and life are marked out for you so plainly that you dare not disobey, etc., etc.

One would think, to hear you, that you had been the subject of a direct revelation in the matter.

I am sure that I have no particular objection to your being conscientious on the subject of love and marriage, as well as any other. Indeed (on the contrary) I *would* say trample either love or worldly advantage under foot, sooner than marry a man whose moral or religious character is what you cannot approve; sooner than take so important a step in your life, and not be able to pray over it. But don't *pretend.* When you do marry for love, say so, and be proud of it (I certainly think it is nothing to be ashamed of); and if you don't, the least said about it the better.

You see, girls, we understand you. There is no use of trying to blind us with your affectations. Be as refined as you choose. Be cultivated, Christian gentlewomen, but — *don't act!* Don't pretend to be geniuses, or saints, with nerves so delicate that a small word or a common word grates on your ear, and that you cannot bear the society of uncultivated people, though all the time trying to impose upon us a heart so large and warm that even a Mrs.

Jelleby would die of envy beholding your superior philanthropy.

Oh! we would like you so well, if you would only be natural. If you only had the courage to be yourselves — nice, smart, presentable girls, who cared how you looked; who thought more of the last *fashion* than the last *poem;* and who, even in affliction, never forgot to order a most becoming bonnet.

But now what can we do? You are so refined we cannot refine you; so smart that it is useless to cultivate you; and so good that you cannot be any "*gooder.*" "*Chacun à son goût;*" but to my notion, you would be a little improved by cultivating your conscience and self-respect, that you might care more "*to be*" than "*to seem to be.*"

I ate some potatoes at a friend's table early in June, which were so large, and fine, and mealy, that I was surprised to learn they were *new* potatoes. Upon my wondering that everybody did not grow them in preference to other kinds, was told that they were *Early Junes*, and

matured earlier than other varieties, but were never any better than I saw them then. "Indeed," continued my host, "you would not like them in *October* at all. They come to perfection too soon to be good for anything in autumn and winter."

Ah! girls, girls! I wonder how many of you are Early Junes? Judging from the number which pass my window every day, the species must be alarmingly on the increase. You are carefully and finely dressed, and are stylish and graceful, without crudeness or awkward girlish ways; and I scarcely wonder that your mothers are proud of you. I *like* you myself, but I don't *approve of you.* What business have you to ripen so soon? To be women at fifteen? To have *lovers* before you have *brains;* and to be able to get up an "unexceptionable toilet" before you have either? At least, you consider it unexceptionable, but *I* don't; and neither would you, if you had taken time to develop brains. No, no; you would have thought twice before you wore a man's hat and boots, put a

camel's hump on your back, and walked the streets in the dress of a harlequin.

But you have not any brains, poor child! and, what is worse, never will have, I am afraid. There is as much of you as there will ever be; for you matured so quickly that the intellect was entirely overlooked.

You are lively, and pleasant, and pretty, and stylish, and it does very well while youth lasts; but in *October*, girls, in *autumn and winter!* I am afraid we shall not like you any better then than we like the potatoes.

And what will you do with yourselves then? You have never *thought* of anything but beaux and dress; never *done anything* but dress and flirt; and never had any other mission but to make yourselves pretty by dress. What will you do in autumn — in middle age? Dress? Well, some of you will; some of you do, I know; but you look like old fools; and — excuse me — you *are* what you *look* like; and I am not the only person who thinks so.

You had hearts when you started, and that

was one reason we liked you so well; but feeding only on self, they are starved out, and either dry up or die a natural death. Even if you get married, you are selfish mothers, selfish wives. You hunger for the old excitement, the old admiration. If you happen to be too pure to be married flirts, you are (*not* often) too good (be you rich) to endeavor to break your neighbor's heart with envy at your superior appointments in house, dress, and equipage. If you be poor, how you worry your husband into expenditure beyond his means, that you may rival your richer neighbors and friends.

Oh! little girls! little girls! what will save you from becoming such women as I see all around me? Cannot we keep you *little* girls till your brains develop, and your hearts grow? I should try — I should try. I would make your home, your girlhood so happy, that you would be sorry to "grow up." I would get you *dolls* to dress, instead of *yourselves*, and help you dress them. Would get you story-books and games; would romp and laugh with

you, and make you sew and study with me. Should not scold you if you happened to be caught in *déshabillé* by company, but teach you to be so clean and neat that it would not often happen.

And what nice times we should have when we went out walking together. We should be so occupied with looking at pretty pictures, and statuary, and flowers, and vases, in the shop-windows, and talking about them, that we should not think of other people's dress, nor of our own.

And at times I would tell you of some noble women — good women whom I had known, *single* women, too — who had lived useful, happy lives. I would read to you of others who had lived great lives, and would tell you what they had thought, written, and accomplished; and then you would not care so much to dress for beaux, and marry the first fool or scamp who asked you, because you were afraid of being called "*old girls;*" for you would know that some of the greatest, best women of every age, in all times, have been "*old girls.*"

Sweet potatoes, are *you* getting tired of waiting? Don't you know that *we* have to wait a great while for you in the fall of the year? That you are longer maturing than any other kind, and will not mature at all, if the soil is not just to your liking?

How you do like warmth and dryness! and how scrubby and good-for-nothing you are without. My mouth waters now at the thought of how nice you used to be, grown in your own Carolinas, on your native soil, in your own sunny clime. How (running wild at your own sweet will) with very little culture you turned out "all right," and were sweet, and mealy, and luscious. How all through the winter in that Southern land (covered by that warm, dry sand) you held your own, and never wilted, or rotted, or lost your sweetness. Still, even then, I remember longing for a good Irish potato, and wondering at dinner-time whether people ever died of too much sweetness. Ah! *these potatoes* certainly are injured by it. If they do not rot outright, they become sticky and dis-

agreeable in consequence, when we attempt to keep them all winter at the North. I for one am tempted to wish they had *less* sugar and *more* starch, to give them more strength, that they might stand our climate better.

Just give them warm soil (these Sweet potatoes), and they will mature at the North as readily as in their own climate. They do not care, not they, so long as they get plenty of sugar and sunshine, whether it be their *native* soil or not. They will stretch out those tendrils of theirs all over creation, after sweetness and warmth. They will run into all the neighboring patches, and even cross wide paths in the search. But they don't always find what they want, and how can they? Why don't they stay at home? They may run around (with impunity) in the soil and climate to which they are indigenous, but it will not do here. We must clip off their runners, and make them stay where they were planted, or they will never turn out well.

Girls of the Sweet-potato type, how much

better off *you are* when you stay where you were planted. But you *don't*, and I hear you say you *won't*.

You are very sweet — you have more sugar than starch; more sweetness than strength; more vanity than pride. You long for admiration, for love, and throw out those tendrils of yours all over creation after it. If you do not get what you want at home, in your own social circle, you go into your neighbor's patches to find it. You attempt all sorts of missions, all sorts of work; you even cross the wide path which separates modest maidens from fast young women, and then — you do not turn out well.

It does seem strange that the very sweetest women are the ones least satisfied with remaining as God made them — that, as a class, they are the ones who try hardest to unsex themselves. It can only be explained from the fact that they have not enough self-respect to glory in their girlhood — their womanhood. Then, too, they are not strong; for sugar *alone* does not give

strength, however pleasant it may be. They cannot endure the storms, the frosts of life. They sink under the discipline and suffering, of which most women have their share. They *don't like it.* They do not get irritable; they are not disagreeable, even. They are bright and sweet; but they wish that they were boys — were men, so as to get rid of little daily cares and vexations; little pains and aches of both body and mind, and those discomforts, generally, which belong to women as much as her smooth skin, small hands and feet, and delicate organization. They do not always throw off all restraint, and (braving public opinion) cross over into man's field; but they go as far as they can — as they dare. They shirk home-duties, and are interested in everything outside which will give them notoriety, or take them away from domestic disagreeableness.

Then how long these girls are maturing. They are children a great while, because they love to lean, to be taken care of and do noth-

ing. They are slow learning woman's dignity, patience, and unselfishness. When they *do* reach maturity, when they get all the sunshine and sugar they want, how luscious they are — how very, very sweet! How we all love them! We cannot help it; but we do not exactly *admire* them. We are sure they will kiss us, and love us, and cling around us while all goes smoothly; but they cannot bear adversity. If they happen to love us so well, with those soft hearts of theirs, that our sorrows become their sorrows, why then, poor darlings! how they will wilt and droop, and sometimes die, when we are driven by the storms of life into shipwreck of fame or fortune.

Oh! I pity these little girls — these *sweet* women! I want to pet them always — to put my arms around them, and ward off everything unpleasant; to shield them from sin, and suffering, and sorrow. But I can't. They must bear their own burdens like the rest of us; and so I would clip their tendrils. I would plant and keep them in their own soil, where I would

put a little more starch, even if they were not quite so sweet. I would not let them lean on me. I would throw them off, that they might be forced to lean on the *Strongest Arm*, and so gain strength. It would be very hard to do so, for it is pleasant to have them cling; but, ah! me, they should cling to "*the Rock*," and not to a poor tree, which storms *may*, and time *must*, destroy.

In the spring, when I want to treat my friends, I give them Bermuda potatoes. People who never eat any other sort like *them*, and imagine (have what else you choose) that you have given them a grand dinner. Whether they have beef or mutton, veal or lamb, it makes no difference, so they get *Bermudas*. Perhaps it is because they are so rare, or because they breathe to us of those sunny climes we so long for in our fitful Northern springs. Possibly we love them because to us they herald summer; it has already reached that far-off land, and these potatoes were matured in its sunshine. But I don't care what the reason is, I love them, and

so do you. We wish they would grow here; but they won't — at least (when they do) they are something else, and *not* delicious, mealy Bermudas.

I know a style of girls so like them — so rare she is, so good, so lovable, and fond of home, and only *there* do you find out her full value. Let sickness and trouble come; let servants be unruly or leave suddenly, and everything be "at sixes and sevens;" let the whole household machinery be deranged, and everybody in despair; then how valuable is my Bermuda girl! How quickly everything adjusts itself at her touch! We don't mind it so much now. We do not care whether the storm be big or little, for there is a wise head, a ready hand, and a brave and loving heart to pilot us through. She seems, too, to breathe of some far-off sunny land where there are no storms; and she brings it near — so near that the air seems full of the warmth and sweetness of that "blest shore," 'neath whose sunshine she has ripened. What care we for the storms? What matters

it? "The winter of our discontent" has passed —summer is at hand.

This girl is seldom what is called fascinating, rarely even pretty; but how pleasing she is, how trustworthy, how calm and brave! *She* may dress our sores (both physical and mental); her touch is so gentle, she will not hurt us.

"Has she any faults?"

If being too gentle, too lenient, be a fault — yes. She can scarcely condemn even sin; sometimes (I am afraid) sacrificing her sense of right to love for the sinner.

As a *little* girl, how she loves her pussies! How she cries because "mamma" will not let them all sleep in the house at night. If little brother has been naughty, and got a whipping, she gives him all her candies and her favorite plaything to console him. She gives all her pennies, and even her own little shoes, to a poor little beggar who has neither. She is not often naughty herself, yet thinks it very cruel to punish naughty children and naughty people. When she grows older, she has a theory that

everybody can be won by love. She *tries* it, and succeeds so often that she almost converts us. Still, it is well she is not a sovereign, for she might upset society by her superabundance of *Mercy* and lack of Justice. But she stays at home so much, and, like the potato, if planted anywhere else, is not a Bermuda at all, that I think *now* she does not a great deal of harm. Sometimes she *gets* harm, by trusting too much in frail, human nature; especially if she happen to love is this the case. How confiding she is! How she trusts everything to her affection! Thinks that a man may be won from evil courses, from even infidelity itself, by love. Oh, darling! if Christ's love has failed to win him, can yours? Can yours? If you be married, trust and love, and hope as much as you can; but, if *not*, why then "a word to the wise" is sufficient; you are wise about other things, be so in this. But you are so rare, so unselfish, that we will delight in you despite this weakness. We will be very fond of you, and thank God

for you, and wish that every home were blessed with such "an angel in the household."

Reader, I could multiply the different styles of girls, but they would only (like different sorts of potatoes) be some one of the kinds I have already mentioned, varied by soil or culture, or, perhaps, a cross of two or three varieties. I have given enough instances to show "there 's a difference in *taters*" and — *girls*. I trust, too, that I have convinced you there *is* a science of girls — that there is a girlology; and that it is worth your study, worth the study of the greatest intellect in the land, either man's or woman's.

He is a poor farmer, who, having potatoes in his field, knows not what sort they are, what soil and culture they need, or (worse still) knows nothing about *potatoes* at all.

We most of us men and women have *girls* in our field. Shall we be poor husbandmen, and not know what sort they are? What soil and culture they need? Not know anything about girls at all?

We study all sorts of things. We read all sorts of things, and try to find out even that "beyond our ken." Shall we not try to read our girls' hearts, and find out what they need to mature them rightly, to develop them into good, refined, brave, Christian gentlewomen.

And, men! do not *you* judge us, unless you know, at least, as much about *us* as you do about your potatoes; unless you know the soil and culture we have had, and even then

"Who knows the past? and who can judge us right?"

But, little girls, don't you get impatient with us older people. Remember we are mortal! Do not exclaim, as you finish this chapter,

"What then?
Who cares for a gnat? — or girl?"

I tell you that we *do* care for you — all of us.

Don't your father care for you when he works all day (sometimes all night), that he may give you luxuries and pleasures? When he denies himself indulgences, and even necessities, that

he may bring home some nice *bonbons*, or the last novel, or a new dress for his "little daughter"?

And your mother, don't *she* care for you? Don't she care for your pleasure, your looks, your health, your manners, till she vexes you by *too* much care for you — too much anxiety for your welfare? Aye, whether or not it be the best thing for you, still give her credit for unselfishness, for love, at any rate. And when she crosses and annoys you, try and remember

> "How that small fretting fretfulness
> Was but love's over-anxiousness,
> Which had not been had love been less."

Do not your brothers care for you, when they can have no fun without you? When they are proud of their smart and pretty sisters, and are ready to whip any boy who denies the fact? Yes, even when they abuse your carefully got up toilet, and bring tears of vexation to your eyes by their ridicule? I assert that even then they care for you — for your appearance.

And the beaux! they care for you, too. Do you (for one instant) suppose that they sport those "immaculate kids," those "killing" neckties, and dandy canes for each other? Or that they go to balls and parties to meet men? Not a bit of it. It is *you* they care for, *girls*. So much do they care for your opinion that they are absolutely afraid of you; and would rather face an enemy in battle, than a girl's laugh or frown. If you put your standard high, how they try to live up to it; and — don't they care for you?

I saw, the other day, a gentleman, hurrying home through the snow and wet, stop his quick step as a little girl fell down in the partly frozen gutter. He looked cold and tired himself, but he picked her up, brushed off her little dress and shoes with his hand, and soothed her kindly, telling her to run home quickly, that she might not take cold, and waiting to see that she did so.

I saw in the cars, too, — indeed, I see it often, — young men and gray-haired men, men in the

garb of gentlemen, and men dressed as workmen, as day-laborers, rise and give you girls seats; and yet you say "no one cares for you."

Yes, yes; you little witches! we *do* care for you. We love your nonsense and brightness in our homes. We care to have you in the street, and in the cars — anywhere on our path, with your laughter and frolicking, and candy-eating, and your cunning little airs. We would sooner put up with your pouting, and naughty tempers, even, than not to have you at all. Oh, girls! we care for you! we care for you!

But we are not always clear-sighted, and often misjudge you; or are weakly loving, and spoil you. We are ambitious for you, and forget that you have hearts, or are self-indulgent, and neglect you.

So, with all our caring, life seems very hard, the world very dark to you, sometimes, darlings! And (if you would be good and happy) you dare not look earthward; those eyes of yours must be turned "skyward, sunward," upward towards ONE who is too *wise* to misjudge, too

good to err, and "He careth for you," and makes *little* duties, *little* cares, *little* trials, *little* sufferings, *little* wrongs seem, oh! *so little* in the light of the *great joy*, the *great* hereafter to which you are looking.

HOBBY-HORSES.

"These are truths unquestionable. If they make no impression, it is because they are too vulgar and notorious."

JUNIUS LETTERS.

IN these days of progress, when everything is advancing at a *velocipede* rate, dare I speak of *hobby-horses?* It *is* somewhat venturesome in an age when toy-merchants put them out of sight, and little boys blush to acknowledge that they own one (lest they should be thought slow), to put down in black and white one's preference for hobby-horses over velocipedes. Still, you "grown-up" people cannot move me from my position by talking about "advance and progress," nor you boys by laughing at my "old fogyism."

Advance and *progress* are both very well when you know what you are advancing *to*, and in

what direction you *are* progressing. What is the use of a movement which accomplishes nothing — which does not pretend to accomplish anything — whose only aim is *going?* Yes, boys, I am an "old fogy." I like *safe* things, and dislike *unsafe* and aimless ones.

Then, now that velocipedes are "the rage," when little boys and great boys run them on the side-walks of our cities without fear of molestation, I should like to know what guarantee we foot-passengers have for life and limb?

It is not always bad manners in our boys either — they cannot often help running you down. How can they suddenly stop one of those vehicles under full headway? How can they tell where they will *pull up?* "Somewhere!" a boy said to me the other day, when, adroitly getting out of his way, I inquired where he was going.

Yes, it is "*somewhere*," or rather *nowhere*, that these boys go on their velocipedes, and my only wonder is, that they don't oftener break

their own necks, and those of other people besides. They go as far as they can (without running off a crossing, or against a brick wall, or people, or dogs, or hand-carts, or other velocipedes), and call it fun; and cry, "See how I go!" And their mammas think it such "fine exercise in the open air" for them, talking in a would-be indifferent tone about the French prince making it his favorite pastime. Of course that never influenced *them* in choosing it for *their* sons; oh! no; "but it is such a *healthy* amusement, and keeps the little fellows so out of the way." Yes, it does keep them out of the way, for our city yards are not the "Royal Gardens," nor our Biddies the intelligent and careful attendants of the French prince.* And so our boys must go to the street for this *very healthy exercise.*

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*This article was written before the "Franco-Prussian" war had caused the poor little prince to pull up "*somewhere.*" That velocipedes are not as popular as they were a year ago, is the best reason I can give for leaving unaltered what I have written; as preachers say, "it proves my position."—AILENROC.

I do not see the exercise — do not see how it develops either bone or muscle, or promotes health — still, as this is a mooted point, I shall let it alone, only asking if the rocking-horse can be ridden often without developing the muscles, straightening the spine, and sending the blood coursing through the cheeks of the palest? Then, too, are we to think more of the health of the *body* than of the mind — of the heart? Alas! when our children are out of the way of their mothers, they are very apt to be *in* the way of somebody, or something, which will not prove good for their soul's health. American mothers! has it come to this — that you approve of a toy because it takes your boys out of your way? The time may come when you will try to keep them *in* the way and cannot. One would think that you would like to now, if not for their sakes, for your own. They make no more noise than that Italian opera troupe you heard the other night. They are a prettier sight than any picture at "the Academy," etc., and more difficult

to read, better worth studying than any book your *superior intellect* has ever mastered.

Pull down out of the garret the old hobby-horse, and let the little ones rock; and rock, even if they *do* wear out your carpets and — nerves. Things can't last forever — carpets must wear out; and, after all, they are not a necessity — one can do without them. As to nerves — it will be a bigger strain on your nerves *some* day, when your boys are far out of your way; out of the way of all that you love and venerate; and, in a moral velocipede, riding — where? *somewhere* — you and I shudder to think *where*. It is so pleasant to be borne along without effort! Will they pull up in time, before they reach the crossing; before they dash their brains out against yonder wall? I fear *not*, and *you* fear not: what about your nerves *now?*

Oh! that mother-love which likes to have the little people about! how beautiful it is! how rare it is in this age of progress!

Women are getting ashamed of their old-

fashioned hobbies — their children, their homes; and I do not like their new-fashioned velocipedes half as well. If they only amounted to anything. If I only knew — if they only knew themselves where they were going, and what they wanted — but they don't. It seems as though all these velocipede people cared about was, to have a right to do *something* — a right to go *somewhere*. They are very trying people to live with, for one never knows where to find them.

You think they are alongside of you, when lo! they are across the street. You turn to speak to them, and they have turned the corner, and are out of sight.

But, as trying as it is to *live* with them, it is more so to *love* them; to twine our hearts about them; to lavish all our best affections on them; and to find — no, we don't find them at all, or, if we *do*, cannot keep them. One's hair grows gray, planning and thinking how to keep track of them. We live in constant dread of their running us down, or running away from us, or

(getting under full headway) of their failing to pull up at the right time, and—somebody gets hurt.

Yes, friends, it *is* safer to ride a hobby, and, I should think, pleasanter. I never rode on a velocipede, but have on a hobby-horse (of course in a nice, lady-like manner). Why not, as well as on a real horse? And, if I am vain of *any* personal accomplishment, it is of my seat on a horse: I learned how to do it on the old white rocking-horse, which stood in our hall in my childhood.

What a real, live horse he was to us all! How we combed his mane, and caressed him, and honored him with the name of "Old Hickory!" What rides we took on him, going just where we chose (in imagination), and we always knew where we were going to—could always tell. It was not "somewhere," but to London or Paris, or where the oranges grew, and the roses blossomed all the year round. Sometimes we joined Gulliver in his travels, or followed Robinson Crusoe to his island home.

Nothing stopped us — neither distance, nor wind, nor wave, even armed soldiery were no barrier, —

"But the whole boundless universe was ours."

Was it of no use, think you? Did it amount to nothing? Have you never, when tired and worn by care, and trouble, and disappointment, for a time forgotten everything, been rested by some book which carried you to scenes away from your trouble! Or have you never had real suffering, real grief, allayed by a trip to some pleasant land? You are not strong enough to forget yourself in loving, active care for others. You are not good enough to sit quietly at home and face your trouble — to face yourself in the trouble. You long to think of something else, of somebody else; and loving friends take pity on you, and carry you to brighter scenes and new people, and you lose yourself — forget that you were never to be happy any more.

And shall not the children's hobby-horses do as much for them?

That active little boy of yours — full of life, and fun, and adventure — how he torments you sometimes. He wants to do something; he wants to see and find out something new. He goes on a voyage of discovery into your work-basket, and unwinds all your spools, takes your needles out of their place, and snaps your thimble-case till he breaks the hinge. Or he teases his little sister, or pinches the baby's ears (to see the effect), and makes it cry. In short, is in everybody's way, and his own, too.

Now get him on his hobby-horse, and suggest to him to hunt buffaloes on the Western prairies, or to chase Indians in the Western territories, and see how he will ride off his restlessness. How fast he will go! how his hair will fly, and his cheeks glow! He is the hunter, the soldier, for the time being; he is far away — his fleet horse has carried him amid new scenes; made him happier, and left *you* and others in peace.

And that little fellow full of poetry, with the artist's soul, the sensitive poet's nature, who

feels wrong keenly, and longs to avenge it. Somebody has rubbed out the picture he had drawn on his slate, or torn his copy of "Swiss Family Robinson," or "the boys" have made fun of his delicate physique and tastes, and his whole nature is grieved, irritated. His eye is full of unshed tears; his lip quivers; and he sits disconsolately, with no care for his usual pastimes. You reason with him; you tell him that he can draw another picture, and have another book, and that he must not care what *the boys* say as long as he does right.

But that *picture* was part of himself — that *particular* book he had associations with; and, besides, it was well thumbed, and he could find all his favorite passages in it "*right away*," as he could not in another copy; and he *does* care for what *the boys* say, and will not be consoled.

Now talk to him about the "knights of old, *sans peur, sans reproche*," who fought for the *right* — ask him if he does not want to be a knight, and ride to battle; and see how soon the tear will be dried, and the eye flash, as he

mounts his hobby. He has forgotten all his troubles, as he dreams of victory and renown; what matters an erased picture, a torn book, to him now? As for the boys — why! he is a Christian knight! he must be magnanimous. They shall all ride in his train to victory, and partake of his fame! Has it done him no good, to take him away from his grievances, and help him to forgive injuries?

Yes, I like *hobby-horses* — like to see children riding off their troubles, and the naughtiness, beneath the shelter of their homes, with loved faces around them; and I like to see older people do the same.

Professor Vitch says, "that every *good* man has a hobby, the *bad* supplying its place with a vice." So let us have the *hobby*, if we must have one or the other. To be sure, it is very inconvenient sometimes to have your corns rocked on by some of these hobbies; your carpets worn out, and your nerves put on the rack by others. It is very inconvenient and unpleasant, but not disastrous — not fatal, by any means.

Then, if it keeps people good; keeps them from vice, why we, ourselves, are the gainers in the long run.

That man who litters up his wife's house and carpets in pursuit of his mania for old books, or coins, or collections of fossils, is certainly a trial to an orderly woman — is much in her way sometimes. Yet there are women whose husbands are never in their way who are more tried; and who, when they sit alone waiting for the step so long in coming, so far away, so far out of the way of virtue and truth, — envy the woman whose husband ruins nothing but her carpets.

It must, too, be very trying to a man accustomed to sedentary and intellectual pursuits (who prefers dust and litter to having his papers disturbed), to possess a wife whose *hobby* is *cleaning*. A wife who, belonging to the "Veneering Family," likes everything *new*, and has no reverence for *old* papers, *old* books, and *old* furniture. Who even invades her husband's sanctum, and lays violent hands on his

old treasures. That old chair, in which he has done his thinking and writing for years, and which just fits his head and back, she sends to auction, and replaces it by a handsomer, softer, better one altogether — intending it as an agreeable surprise. But he has lost an old friend, does not care for the new one, and does not appreciate the surprise.

She dusts and cleans, and some little slip of paper, with a date or memoranda on it, is gone. It seems of no value to *her*, but the husband (poor man) must search through many volumes to replace it. Yet he bears it all with patience, for his wife is good and loving; his hearth and home are always bright and clean; and his meals punctual and well-ordered. Why should he not be patient with her *hobby?* She has no *vice.*

Our friend has a religious hobby, or a medical or political one, and we get afraid to ask him to our tea-drinkings, lest he should rock on somebody's toes, and disturb the harmony of our pleasant gatherings. Or he has started

a society for ameliorating the condition of some class or another, or invented a patent tooth-pick, or gotten a mania for autographs; and we are afraid (in the first instance) to introduce him to our rich acquaintances, fearing he may ask for a subscription or patronage; and to our famous ones (in the second) lest he solicit their autographs.

And all this sort of thing does annoy and worry us very much. It is so unpleasant to have one's taste offended, one's pride wounded, one's nerves upset; still, "*there is nobody hurt*" very much.

Yet, as we are only human, after all (be we ever so good), I am afraid we are often apt to prefer the man of tact and address, even if he have a vice.

I do *not* assert that *all men of tact have vices*, only that *most all vicious men have tact.* Like velocipedes, they run smoothly, and we are apt to see nothing out of the way — nothing disagreeable in them, till they run us, or themselves, off the track.

But these people with hobbies we always know where to find; they always know where to find themselves, and know what they *want*, even if they never get it. They *aim* high, at any rate.

Did not Columbus know what he wanted? and Galileo, and Sir Isaac Newton, and Benjamin Franklin, and Mrs. Fry? Do not people accuse Miss Dix and John B. Gough of riding *their* hobbies to death? Yet do we not honor them? Are we not, as Americans, proud of them; and as Christians, thankful for them?

I once heard a great and good man define *genius* as "a natural bent for some pursuit, with the will and capability to pursue it perseveringly." This was many years ago, and since then the time and opportunity have been given me for making many observations, the result of which prompts me to make the following query. Is not a man who has a hobby, and is said to ride it to death, a genius?

But all of us have not the will or energy to ride our hobbies to the death; we give in at

the first heat. We have not genius; we do not win the race!

Others have hobbies at the start, but they become old-fashioned and unpopular; and (having neither the good taste nor moral courage to ride them any more) they hide them away in the garret, and take to velocipedes, which carry them "*somewhere*," — I do not like to say where, for fear of rocking on somebody's toes, or lest my own skirts get soiled by touching the ground where they ride.

I mount my hobby and ride to a land where the *men* are all Christian knights, fighting for *the right*, storming the strong fortress of Satan in this world, and demolishing daily the stronger citadel of SIN in their own hearts.

Where the *women* are all Christian gentlewomen, worthy of such knights; women glorying in their womanhood; women in whom *the touch of angel nature* has so grown we almost see their wings, and forget that they are the daughters of that Eve who fell, because she tried to be other than she was made; because she would know more than was revealed!

And in this land there are no velocipedes;—the children all have rocking-horses; and they ride and sing. All the grown people have hobbies; what care they for getting middle-aged? They are only farther on in the race. What care they for the golden hair turned gray? They are only ripening.

Reader, I have ridden off my restlessness, and I don't care if somebody has rubbed out my picture. I can and will draw another. What matters it if my book be torn—my plaything broken? I cannot *stop* to mourn. I'm a Christian soldier fighting for the right.

And I'll forgive *the boys* (and girls, too,) for the many times they have made life a burden to me. I do not mean the little people, who are so many flowers in my pathway, but those *larger folk*, who ignore one's nerves, laugh at one's tastes, and forget that one has a heart to break and a soul to be fed.

Yes, friends, I forgive you—every one! Wilt mount? Wilt ride in my train to battle?—to VICTORY?

THE END.

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